

SEVERAL EXCELLENT METHODS
O F
HEARING MASS,

With FRUIT and BENEFIT,
According to the Institution of that Divine Sacrifice,
and the Intention of our

Holy Mother the Church.

WITH MOTIVES

To induce all good Christians, particularly Religious Persons, to make Use of the same:

COLLECTED TOGETHER

By the Right Honourable

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Superior of the English Augustin Nuns.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Motives proposed before each Mass will very much contribute to raise Esteem and Devotion in time of that August Sacrifice; therefore it is advisable and much recommended to all to allow so much time before Mass as to read the Motives which precede the Method you then intend to make use of: and also from time to time the Fruits which may be drawn from Holy Mass. page



M O T I V E S

AND METHODS

to assist devoutly at

H O L Y M A S S.

*General Motives to raise Esteem and Devotion
to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.*

THE most sublime action that the Church militant can offer to God, is that of the Holy Mass, because the victim offered to his Divine Majesty is of an infinite dignity: Christ therein receiving a new birth from the mouth of the Priest when he pronounces the sacramental words of Consecration, and dies again a mystical death. The Holy Ghost is the sacred fire which, by the victim then offered, sanctifies the Church, and all that assist at the Sacrifice as they ought.

Nothing ought to rejoice us so much as the advantage we have to assist daily at Holy Mass, in which we may enrich ourselves with the merits of Christ; nor can we do any action during our lives comparable

to that of every day offering to the eternal Father, by the hands of the Priest, the Sacrifice of the body and blood of his only Son.

All things are infinite in the Sacrifice of Holy Mass: the victim that is offered is infinite; the God to whom it is offered is infinite; Jesus Christ being the principal Priest and Sacrificer; Sacrificing himself in person, to his eternal Father, by the hands of the Priest. It is he who by his minister pronounces the Sacramental words which operate this great mystery: Therefore one Mass, tho' celebrated by a wicked Priest, renders more glory to God than all the homages which Men and Angels can pay him.

God ordained the Holy Mass, in which the history of his passion and death is mysteriously acted as a real but unbloody representation of that bloody Sacrifice of his death, which was the greatest benefit God could give to man, or man receive from God, it being the highest expression his omnipotent love could make; which deserves not only all our love, but all we have or can have: and that this might make a deeper impression in our hearts and minds, he appointed this Divine Representation; to which we are invited as spectators, and ought to come

come to it well furnished with love and compassion.

Holy Mass being the same Sacrifice that was offered upon Mount Calvary for our redemption, we ought to assist thereat with gratitude and love, with a reverential fear, and with an extreme devotion and attention, it containing the mysteries of our Saviour's death and passion, which we know was the greatest and most solemn action that ever was performed, when in the midst of the world and view of the people, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, suffered death, dying on a cross by the hands and for the Redemption of his creatures; a spectacle so full of dreadful Majesty, whether we consider the person, the end, or the manner, that it astonished the Angels, and was a spectacle worthy of God.

This holy Sacrifice being the representation of our Saviour's bitter death and passion, we are, as it were, indispensably obliged to apply ourselves to it, especially after the command that Christ gave, saying, *Do this in memory of me*: it is then his will that we should renew those dolorous mysteries, as it was for that end he instituted the sacrifice of Holy Mass.

This being, it seems, that though we may entertain our selves with other pious
A 3 thoughts

thoughts during the time of Mass, yet none but those of the Passion appear entirely conformable to the intention of Jesus Christ: And how can we, at Mass, behold Christ immolated, as truly as he was upon Mount Calvary, and his Precious Blood crying to us from the Altar, that he dies and is again sacrificed, and entertain any thought but of his infinite love which deprives him of his life?

To reap the full profit of this Divine Sacrifice, we must not only have an intention to hear Mass, but a formal application to what Christ does who is our Head, and offers us his members in sacrifice. We do not hear Mass as we ought when we omit to unite ourselves with him. We should join with him by uniting our intentions with his, and by our application to what he therein does; the Sacrifice of Holy Mass being the mystery of our reconciliation and sanctification. Many souls that are now in hell might not have been there, if they had but once heard Mass as they ought to have done: for by means thereof they might have received such efficacious graces for their entire conversion, and such strength for to have withstood and overcome temptations, that they would never have come to that misfortune.

When

When we hear Mass, we should always reflect that Christ acts as Priest, and that the Priest is but his Minister.

2dly, That he is also the victim that is offered, as well as the Priest that offers it.

3dly, That it is for us he offers it; so that we cannot do better in time of Mass than to keep ourselves united to him who is pleased to perform all our duties for us.

We must observe another thing when we hear Mass, which is to communicate spiritually when we are not allowed to do it sacramentally. And this practice is of so great value that it supplies for Sacramental Communion, and is as acceptable in the sight of God (who sees our heart and the desire we have to receive him) when, for just reasons, we cannot sacramentally do it: and these frequent Spiritual Communions will be a good preparation for Sacramental Communion.

The greater purity of soul we bring to Holy Mass, the more capable we are of sharing in the fruits of this adorable Sacrifice; therefore we must first humble ourselves in the presence of God, and then, making an act of contrition, beg pardon for our sins. The following prayer may serve for that effect.

O My God, prostrate before your Divine Majesty, I acknowledge myself the most ungrateful and most unworthy of your creatures. I accuse myself before you and your Angels, of all the sins of my life past; of all my negligences in your service; of my neglects in complying with your blessed will and holy inspirations; of my sloth and tepidity in your service; and in the exercise of your Divine Love: in reparation of which, I offer you all the merits of Christ, who will soon render himself present for me upon the Altar. Receive, Lord, his death and passion in satisfaction, and for the remission of my sins; his indefatigable labours to repair my negligences; his prompt obedience in complying with all your wills to satisfy for my sloth therein. Look not on my unworthiness, but upon your Son, who, by an excess of goodness, gives himself to me to satisfy for all my debts. *Respice in Faciem Christi tui.*

A METHOD OF
HEARING MASS,

*By considering it as a Representation of our
SAVIOUR'S Passion.*

WHEN the Priest comes to the Altar, represent to yourself how the Jews, after having taken our Saviour, loaded him with chains, and dragged him to Jerusalem, and from tribunal to tribunal.

Reflect a little, that had not love first captivated his heart, his enemies could never have bound him. Consider him as a victim going to be sacrificed for your salvation. Compassionate him in the affronts he suffers, and follow him in spirit with a resolution never more to forsake him.

O Charity ! how strong and powerful are your bonds, since they captivate a God ! O may they bind me so fast to him, that nothing may ever more separate me from him.

From the Epistle to the Offertory.

Reflect on the many false accusations that the Jews brought against our Saviour. First, as to his doctrine ; though he is the
way

way and the truth, who neither can deceive nor be deceived. Then as to his works, though most holy, just, and irreproachable.

Learn from the silence and meekness of Jesus, in this occasion, to suffer without murmuration or complaint, whatever injury, false accusation, censures, or malicious interpretations of your doings, or sayings, though innocent and well meant.

From the Offertory to the Elevation.

Consider Jesus offering himself to his eternal Father, his body for stripes, his head for thorns, and his hands and feet for nails.

Return most humble thanks for the same, and for the blood he shed from all those parts; to make thereof, not only a bath to wash away the stains of sin from your soul, but also a sovereign balm to fortify and strengthen you in your pains, labours, and temptations. Beg the grace to make use of it in all such occasions.

Offer the sacrifice of Mass for the same intention, for which Christ offered the bloody Sacrifice of Mount Calvary to his eternal Father, and for the intention he now offers the unbloody one.

For

For the exaltation of our Holy Mother the Church ; and for the sanctification and accomplishment of all God's designs in his Elect.

To beg that union and peace may ever be in this family, and that each one of it may be so happy as to praise his mercies for a whole eternity.

And that he would please to grant our Bishop and Superiors, and all that have the charge of us, what is necessary for their own sanctification, and that of the persons committed to their care.

Besides these intentions, add one of these following ones, according to the days of the week.

On Sundays, for the conversion of hereticks and infidels throughout the whole world, especially in England.

On Mondays, for obdurate sinners.

On Tuesdays, for all that are in or near their Agony.

On Wednesdays, for the conversion of England.

On Thursdays, for peace.

On Fridays, for all those that labour for the conversion of souls.

On Saturdays, for our family, and for all its necessities spiritual and temporal, and to obtain a happy death for each of them.

From

From the Elevation to the Division of the Host.

Consider Christ as the Sovereign High-Priest, who on the Altar, as on the Cross, offers himself in sacrifice to his Eternal Father, for to appease his just anger, and satisfy for our sins; blotting out the decree of our condemnation, and signing with his blood a new alliance between his Father and us.

Look on him in the hands of the Priest, as in the arms of the Cross. Your heart must be of stone if this spectacle does not penetrate it with tender sentiments of love and gratitude.

This sacrifice being the same, and of as great value and virtue now as when offered on Mount Calvary, your affections ought to be the same. With what respect, devotion, and confidence to obtain what you ask, ought you to assist thereat?

Approach the Cross of your Saviour with respect, and remember, that when he prays for his enemies and persecutors, it is for you he prays. Beg his pardon for all your offences, and grace to amend.

Then offer him to his Eternal Father, saying: O my God! Father of my Lord Jesus Christ: I offer you the heart of your beloved

beloved Son as he offers it himself: receive it for me with all its affections, and all the acts proceeding from it, for they are all mine, since it is for me that he sacrifices himself. Receive them with all his merits, in satisfaction for all my sins, in thanksgiving for all your graces and favours. Receive them that thereby you may grant me all necessary graces for my salvation and perfection; and especially the grace of a happy death. In short, receive the affections of that sacred heart, as so many acts of love, adoration, and praise from me: for it is only by means of your Son that we can worthily love, praise, and glorify you.

At the Division of the Host.

When the Priest parts the Host, call to mind the cruel separation of our Saviour's sacred soul from his body. Conceive, if possible, the enormity of sin, which could no otherways be worthily repaired than by the death of God-man.

Weep bitterly for those you have committed; and resolve rather to die than to deprive Christ of the fruit of his passion, which he only suffered to exterminate sin.

At the Priest's Communion.

Reflect how the soul of Jesus Christ, as soon as separated from his body, descended into Limbus to comfort with his presence the souls of the Faithful there detained; and by that Divine presence of a hell he made it a heaven.

Beseech him to do the same in your soul, by spiritual Communion, if you are not allowed to receive him sacramentally: but dispose yourself for it by an act of humility, and of contrition, and a great desire to receive him, that you may be united to him: for which effect say,

O my God: I do most ardently desire to receive you, and to have all the dispositions necessary for that effect; but I acknowledge myself a sinner, and therefore very unworthy of it. On this account, I dare not presume to receive you, who are my Lord and my God: but I offer you the devotion and charity, wherewith you were received by your most blessed Mother, and by all your Saints; and the faith and devotion with which all your servants in the state of grace throughout the whole world, do this day receive you.

You

You can, dear Lord, work in me, without my receiving you sacramentally all that you can operate with it; say then the word, and my soul shall be sanctified and saved. Make me partaker of all the affections and devotions wherewith the just receive you to-day; and of all the effects which you by this Adorable Sacrament work in their souls; and of those effects for which you instituted and ordained this Holy Sacrament for the everlasting glory of the Divine Majesty.

Never fail to communicate spiritually at every Mass: For tho' it be not of so great value as Sacramental Communion, yet it is of great advantage if well performed, and the best preparation for Sacramental Communion.

After which imagine you have received him, and entertain him in your heart, as you would do if you had really received him.

Then descend with him in Spirit into Purgatory, and beseech him to comfort and release those Souls, by applying to them the merits of his life and death, and the fruits of Holy Mass.

ANOTHER MANNER OF
HEARING MASS,

*By following our DIVINE SAVIOUR in his
interior sufferings.*

BEfore the beginning of Mass compose yourself in the most respectful posture you can, kneeling with true humility. Then make an act of Contrition for your sins, which have been the cause of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ; for the greater purity of soul you bring, the more you will partake of the fruits of this Adorable Sacrifice.

Then offer it to God, to render him due glory, to obtain pardon of your sins, victory over temptations, and the grace to fulfil the duties of your state and charge; and for peace, union, and a happy death, both for yourself, and every one of the family.

At the beginning of the Mass, represent to yourself Jesus Christ, in the person of the Priest, he first mounts up to the Altar and then descends; which steps may represent to you the way our Saviour went from the cenacle to the garden of Gethsemani. Then the Priest, bowing his knee, must

must mind you of our Lord's prostrating himself before the Majesty of his eternal Father in that garden. Endeavour to enter into those dispositions of humility and respect which abases Jesus in presence of the greatness of that Divine Essence before whom all created beings are as nothing.

Then, with great devotion and attention, call to mind all that passed in the garden of Gethsemani; at which all heaven seemed to tremble with a certain horror to behold God in Christ Jesus, under the figure of a criminal, loaded with the execrable sins of all mankind. He suffers there the greatest humiliation and confusion that can be imagined, annihilated before the infinite Majesty of his eternal Father, he makes him an honourable amends, and produces an act of so great sorrow, that he merits absolution and pardon of all mankind.

He there appears a criminal (tho' spotless) and is treated with all rigour by the divine justice. As the victim for sin, he receives the sentence of death, which he accepts of to give us life, and restore to us what sin had taken from us, and he merits for us the grace to enter a commerce with his eternal Father.

The sight of what he was to undergo and suffer, cast him into an agony which forced blood, as drops of sweat, to fall on the ground from all parts of his body, which, with all he was to suffer, he applied to each soul in particular.

All creatures, says St. Paul, rise up against Jesus, as sinners, to revenge the injury sin does to God. He is abandoned to the powers of darkness, and reduced to such an extremity, that he likens it to the pangs of death, saying, his soul is sorrowful even to death. Sin covers him over with infamy; and in this hateful condition he appears to his own, and to his Father's eyes, who draws due satisfaction from him, and that even to the utmost rigour. The soul of Jesus not only suffers a mortal repugnance of the approach of sin, infinitely odious and detestable to him, but also an extreme apprehension and terror, which sinners have of God's wrath and fury; and this apprehension is as great as the sight he has is clear and penetrating.

In these reflections, or any other mystery of our Saviour's Passion, you may bestow your thoughts till the Elevation.

At

At the Elevation.

Christ, being crucified, was raised on high; see and adore him so in the hands of the Priest. He is sacrificed for your sake on the Altar as well as on Mount Calvary; he thinks of you, prays for you, and offers himself to the justice of the eternal Father, to appease his wrath against you. In a word, he is wholly taken up with your concerns, acting for you on the Altar as on Mount Calvary. Which reflection ought to enflame you with his love, and give you a firm hope that he will be heard, and obtain whatever he asks for you. Unite your intention with those he has for your salvation, protesting that you will all he wills, and that you will stand to what he promises in your behalf.

From that time till the *Agnus Dei*, remain in the spirit of an united sacrifice with Jesus as much as possible, to make the sacrifice complete, according to his merciful designs: with silence and respect annihilated; and, as it were, lost in Jesus, who there offers himself for you. In this manner did his blessed Mother assist at the bloody Sacrifice he offered on the Cross; her eyes and heart fixed on him, by a simple regard, full of respect and love.

You

You may also entertain your thoughts with the words Christ spoke on the Cross; admiring in the first how easily he forgives his enemies; and considering yourself as one of them, heartily beg pardon, and confidently hope to obtain it.

2dly, His liberality to the good thief; beg you may experience the same at the hour of your death.

3dly, His tender love and concern for you expressed by his recommending you to his blessed Mother, in the person of St. John, and speak what affection shall suggest.

At the Agnus Dei.

Consider how our Saviour's love was strong as death; being dead, he is taken down from the Cross to be laid in the sepulchre. Here remember to prepare your heart that it may serve for a tomb to lay him in, for which effect, dispose yourself for communion; and be sure to communicate spiritually, if you may not do it sacramentally. Desire it ardently, that Jesus may live in you and you in him; for which end he instituted it and desires to be received; so that all your thoughts, words, and actions may be the effects of his

his Divine Spirit, and not of your own will. Make acts proper for communion, as humility, love, and contrition, beseeching him to wash your soul from sin with his precious blood, and to come into your heart, and make of it a worthy habitation for himself. And omit not to beg him that, as he refuscitated his body and gave it a new life, he would please, by his sacred presence, to do the same to your soul, giving it a new life, which may be visible by your happy change of inclinations and manners.

The Ends for which Holy Mass was instituted by CHRIST, and is offered by our Holy Mother the Church, may serve for entertainment during the same.

Our Lord's Spirit was that of an entire sacrifice. There are four sorts of sacrifices.

The first of a Holocaust, purely to adore, worship, and praise the sovereign greatness and goodness of God,

The second of Thanksgiving, for the continual graces and favours received.

The third of Impetration, to crave and obtain such graces and gifts as we stand in need of.

The fourth of Propitiation, for the forgiveness of sins.

Our

Our Saviour instituted the Sacrifice of the Mass for these ends, that he might render to God an infinite honour proportionable to his greatness : Give him thanks answerable to his benefits : Satisfy in all rigour of justice for all the sins of mankind, and obtain for us all we want and request.

Our dependence on God lasting every moment, we should every moment adore and glorify him. He bestowing continually new benefits upon us, we should always and each moment offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to him. Our wants being continual, each moment of our lives would also require an impetratory Sacrifice. Our offences being every moment with an uncertainty, whether any past ones are remitted ; each instant of our lives would also exact from us a propitiatory Sacrifice.

Any one of these duties is impossible to us, and much more all of them. In this then consists the admirable blessing of Holy Mass ; Christ our Lord fulfilling by it all our obligations to his eternal Father and that in an infinitely perfect manner beyond all that the saints and angels could do, during a whole eternity.

Our Saviour then offering for us those four Sacrifices in each Mass, it is our duty

to offer them with him, either all at once, or one at a time, as may best suit with our present disposition.

As to the first, which is a Holocaust, or Sacrifice of Praise, wholly to adore and worship the greatness and goodness of God.

Sacrifices were established to honour God only, who being infinite in all kinds, contains in himself all greatness, and all excellency, which to honour worthily, should be with the destruction and sacrifice of all that has a being; they ought to annihilate themselves before him as nothing in his presence. But it not being convenient that mankind should be destroyed, and yet necessary that God should be honoured with the greatest honour possible, and that daily, Christ, as head and chief, performs this for us, annihilating and sacrificing himself on our Altars, and putting himself into our hands to be offered in sacrifice to his eternal Father; that thereby we may render to him all the honour we owe him, and all he deserves, or can possibly exact.

This was Christ's first and principal design in instituting this adorable mystery, to render his eternal Father an infinite honour and homage, justly due to so excellent

lent a Being ; and knowing it impossible for men to pay God the honour he deserves, though all mankind together, with all other creatures, should immolate themselves in sacrifice : since all men together are no more than an atom, in regard of the infinite greatness of God, he is pleased to do it, offering himself continually in sacrifice to pay the homage we owe, and cannot satisfy without him.

It is certain that the adorable Sacrifice of Mass renders an infinite glory to God, because the victim that is offered is of an infinite dignity, being God. It follows then, that though we should offer all the sacrifices that have ever been immolated to the Divine Majesty, from the creatures of the world, till Christ's incarnation ; we should not render him so much glory as we do by assisting devoutly at Holy Mass, in which we offer to Almighty God his only Son by the hands of the Priest.

Hence it follows, that God receives more glory and honour by one only Mass, than he receives in heaven from all the Saints and Angels, who continually praise him, though the glory they render him is greater than we can conceive ; nevertheless it is finite, they being but pure creatures ; but in the Mass it is a God that sacrifices

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and annihilates himself, which renders the Almighty an infinite honour. And all that assist at it, and share in that Sacrifice, joining themselves to those adorations which Christ renders, and offering them up to his eternal Father, thereby perform an action more glorious to God, and in some measure more profitable to themselves, than if they were in heaven singing his praises.

What comfort for a soul that truly desires to glorify God and to pay him due honour? How careful should this make us to assist thereat? God, on his side, is so good as to join our interest so with his own, that we cannot promote his glory without advancing our own good: *Would you believe, says St. Augustin, that God, even in the sacrifice he ordains for his glory, seems to consider his own advantage less than ours?*

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A MANNER OF
H E A R I N G M A S S ,

When we consider it as a Sacrifice of praise only; purely to adore and worship the greatness of GOD, for which intention we must offer it.

AT the beginning, having placed yourself with great respect and humility in the presence of God, and made an act of contrition for your sins, imagine that an Angel says to you, as one said to St. John, *Ascend, and I will shew you what must be done.*

Represent to yourself the spectacle which was shewn him; who, wrapt in spirit, saw in heaven a throne, and a person seated on it, and round it a rainbow like unto an emerald; which throne was surrounded by twenty-four others, on which were seated as many seniors in white garments, with crowns of gold on their heads. And there were also four great animals which never ceased day and night to repeat continually, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Almighty Lord, who was, who is, and who ever will be. And whilst the heavens echo'd the praises and benedictions
uttered

uttered by those animals, all the seniors prostrated themselves, laying their crowns at his feet, and crying out, You deserve, O Lord our God, to receive glory, honour, and power, for you have created all things; and it was because you would have it so, that they have received a being and were made.

Then reflect that this great God has his eyes first upon you, to receive the divine sacrifice you are going to offer by the hands of the Priest; and that an innumerable number of angels, with due respect and fear, surround the Priest and the Altar. With this idea assist at Mass to acknowledge the infinite greatness of God, and to render him all due honour.

Affections.

Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, Master of all creatures; before whom all kings of past, present, or future ages, together with all their subjects, are but as a drop of water, or a grain of sand! You whose Majesty fills the whole universe, and whose lustre dazzles the most sublime intelligences, whose power makes hell to tremble, and whose charms ravish the blessed. Who, with one only word, have

drawn all created beings out of nothing ; and without the least diminution of your treasures have furnished them with all the goods they have.

Behold me your unworthy creature prostrate at your feet, begging that, together with the Sacrifice of your dear Son, you will please to accept that of my unworthy self, and the promises made for me at baptism, and those I made at my profession, which I here again renew.

I adore you my God ; I believe in you ; I expect and hope all from you ; I acknowledge all my love is due to you ; I place all my felicity in loving and serving you.

How sweet is it to have for a Father, so amiable and so powerful a God ! When I reflect that you are willing to be my Father, I grieve that my understanding is so narrow as not to conceive so inestimable a benefit ; and that my heart is not capable to love you as I ought. I adore you, with respect, as my sovereign ; I embrace you with tenderness, as my Father ; and I consecrate myself wholly to you, as my Creator and bestower of my being.

At the Offertory.

Consider Christ as the only victim that can worthily honour the greatness of God.

Offer

Offer him and all his merits to his eternal Father, and so by his means render him all the honour he merits and deserves, and as much as you owe him, or he can justly exact from you. This must also mind you to offer yourself; that is, the sacrifice of your liberty: for he that gives his liberty, gives all, and can no more possess any thing.

Affections.

Take possession of me, my God, for I am wholly yours. Imprint in my memory the remembrance of your presence, and divine perfections in my understanding the knowledge of you, and in my heart your love; and grant me the grace to submit my will to all your laws, and to each point of order for your sake. Destroy, and make me overcome whatever may dispute your right in me. I desire to depend wholly on you: it is you alone, my God, that I desire to serve, and to have no other end in all I do, than the accomplishment of your holy will, and your greater glory: grant me but that, and I will desire no more.

At the Elevation.

It is at that precious moment, that God showers down a deluge of graces into the
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hearts

hearts of those that are disposed to receive them; a deluge of Sanctity for the just, and of Penance for sinners. And it is then that we obtain of the eternal Father all we ask him by the death and passion of his Divine Son.

Adore our Saviour in the Host, and consider him as a true model of a perfect Holocaust. He has spared nothing, but has sacrificed all for the glory of his eternal Father: thence learn what you ought to do; resolve upon it, and beg grace for that effect.

Affections.

My soul, behold the afflicting state which your dear Saviour was reduced to upon Mount Calvary, and you shall not find the least thing, neither in soul nor body, which he has not sacrificed for his eternal Father's glory and your salvation.

Sovereign Lord, what obligations have I to you! who not content to have sacrificed yourself on the cross for me, do daily renew the same sacrifice for me. I believe you as really present here, as I do that you are seated at the right hand of your eternal Father. If on Calvary you had the goodness to promise him that I should one day
sacrifice

sacrifice myself with you, the day is now come ; be pleased then to offer me to him united with yourself, for I am so base and unworthy of his acceptance, that I dare not offer myself alone ; but united to you, and offered by you, and despicable as I am, I shall be agreeable to his Divine Majesty.

O eternal Father, behold here your dear, your Divine Son, and for his sake look upon me whom he has redeemed with his precious blood ; since, together with my dear Saviour, I consecrate myself to you, to be disposed of, as it shall please your Divine Majesty, for time and for eternity.

At the Communion.

Jesus Christ present on the Altar, has an ardent desire to be received by you, that he may adore, praise, and worship his eternal Father in you, and pay him, in your behalf, those homages you owe him : and together with himself, offer you up in Sacrifice to his Divine Majesty. Be sure therefore to communicate spiritually, making acts, as if you were sacramentally to receive him, as of humility, contrition, and a great desire to receive him.

After which, consider him in your heart, adore him there, and offer first yourself
to

to him : and then offer him to his eternal Father, and his adorations to acknowledge the supreme dominion he has over you and all creatures, and beg him to receive the same in lieu of all the honour and homage due to his sovereign greatness from you and all creatures. If you desire that your offering may be pleasing to God, you must unite your heart with the heart of Jesus ; for all your tears and sighs, if not united with his, will not touch the heart of God.

Penetrate, if you can, the sacred heart of Jesus, when he offers himself in Sacrifice on the Altar of your heart to his eternal Father. What flames of love will you there discover ! It is there that he contemplates his eternal Father, and profoundly adores him ; offering his body, soul, and all his merits, for the sanctification of your soul, and inflame it with his love.

Of all other means, this of Holy Communion is the most powerful. At Mass never fail to communicate spiritually when you are not permitted to do it sacramentally. And beseech him, who came down from heaven, to enflame your heart with his holy love, that he would please even now to inkindle that flame in it, and to
teach

teach you the true method of loving him. For if you know that, you know all; and provided he bestows that upon you, let him exact what he pleases, tell him you are content. In short, beg him so to unite your heart with his, that you may be one with him, according to his divine will, for time and for eternity.

The Second Design our LORD had in the Institution of the adorable Sacrifice of HOLY MASS was, that it should be a perpetual Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, which might worthily acknowledge all the divine Favours and Benefits, and render him answerable Thanks.

THE Divine Majesty continually bestowing new favours upon us, we ought likewise every moment to offer him a sacrifice of thanksgiving, which duty Christ knew was impossible to us; and therefore he fulfils that obligation for us, to his eternal Father, by means of Holy Mass (in which consists its greatest advantage); and that in an infinitely more perfect manner than all the Saints and Angels could do during a whole eternity.

For

For this end we ought to assist at Mass, that we may thereby render infinite thanks to Almighty God for all the favours we daily receive, since all we are, or have, is his gift to us; and as if that were not yet enough, he has, as it were, drained his greatest treasure which is of an infinite value, and has given it to us; to wit, his only Son, for which none but himself can render worthy thanks.

We should therefore, by necessity, have remained ungrateful, had we not had his only Son, whom he has made ours, by giving him to us, that we may present him in return for all benefits received.

When our Saviour instituted this adorable Sacrifice, the Evangelist observes, that he first rendered thanks to his eternal Father. This is what he continues to do daily on our Altars. He there, in our behalfs, renders due thanks for all God's favours, and as much as he deserves; for it being the thanksgiving of a God, it can be no less than infinite; and therefore God can neither possibly receive, nor exact greater.

It follows then, that by assisting devoutly at Mass, and uniting our hearts and will with that of Jesus, we by him and with him
render

render thanksgiving to God, which is infinite and worthy of himself.

Though we should have been upon our knees, from the first moment of our lives to the last of our days, employed in thanking Almighty God, with all imaginable fervour for all his benefits, and that all souls, both in heaven and earth, should have joined with us, yet we should not so worthily have thanked his Divine Majesty, as we do by hearing Mass devoutly.

What a comfort ought this to be to us, and with what joy ought we to assist thereat; since by it we can worthily acknowledge, and render those thanks to God which are due to him for all his mercies to us.

Let us then, with all possible reverence, offer this great Sacrifice in thanksgiving for all favours received, both spiritual and corporal, for the best means to obtain new favours, is to be grateful for them we have received. And nothing being more proper for acknowledgment than the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, we may offer it for that intention, using the following method.

A METHOD OF
H E A R I N G M A S S,

*When we consider it as a Thanksgiving
Sacrifice.*

A T T H E B E G I N N I N G.

HAVING placed yourself in the presence of God, and made an act of contrition, represent to yourself the Angels and Saints surrounding the Throne of God, and continually singing canticles of praise and thanksgiving to the glory of their benefactor, recounting therein, and extolling his innumerable benefits. Join yourself in spirit with them, and render the best thanks you are able for all those you have received

Affections.

Being wholly incapable, my God, of rendering the thanks I owe you, I offer you all those that are paid you by the blessed in heaven; begging you will please to receive them in acknowledgment of all your infinite mercies to me. The multitude of your favours are so many, and each
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My dear Redeemer, you having served me as a victim to offer, be now for me as High-Priest, and in offering yourself offer me also, as a member of your mystical body, and the purchase of your blood, to labour the rest of my days for the divine glory.

The Bread and Wine which is offered,
may put you in mind of God's temporal
D benefits

benefits bestowed upon us, for which you may begin to thank him.

Affections.

O my God, the Author of my being ! I am indebted to you for the life you have given me ; or, to speak more properly, which you hourly give me ; since if you did not each moment conserve me I should return to nothing. On every side that I turn me I see and enjoy your benefits. All you have made, you have made for my use. Add to this, the evils you have hindered from falling upon me, and the dangers you have drawn me out of : For all which I can never sufficiently thank you. The least I can do in return, is to resolve that for the remainder of my life I will make use of all your benefits to increase your glory ; for which I beg your grace : And if I am not so happy as to give my life for you who are the Author of it and all I have, at least I may thus do it, by abstaining from all you forbid, and exactly performing all you command.

My Sovereign Redeemer and High-Priest, who has paid the price of what I ask, give it me then, with a heart conformable to yours, which may truly and constantly love you,

you, with such a love as may best acknowledge yours to me; which love you only can bestow, and which through your sacred merits I beg.

At the Consecration and Elevation.

Here consider those infinitely greater benefits which God has bestowed on you in your redemption, and return most humble thanks for the same. Consecration representing the incarnation of our Saviour, who descended from heaven into the womb of the blessed Virgin, as he is pleased to descend into the hands of the Priest at the words of consecrating, and, his elevating him, represents his being lifted up when on the Cross, where he expired for your redemption.

Affections.

All your other benefits, my God, compared to these, appear but small; for these are incomprehensible even to the most sublime intelligences. And what renders them still more worthy of admiration is, your having done them for creatures who rather deserved to feel indignation and anger.

O inconceivable source of goodness! What has it cost you to redeem me? This

adorable Sacrifice represents it to me, when by virtue of the Sacramental Words, I adore your sacred Body in the Host, and your Blood in the Chalice: It minds me of those cruel torments you suffered, which forced each drop of blood from your sacred veins, and your soul from your body. Here I lose myself, and can only say, that your boundless love has ever made you forget your greatness and my baseness. None but you, my God, could carry love to so high a pitch.

Whilst you, my Lord, so profusely pour forth your treasures upon me, I am so niggard to you, that when there is question of proving my love to you, by suffering for you, I examine whether I am obliged to it under sin; love and gratitude not sufficing, though by them I am most certainly obliged. A torrent of tears cannot wash off so great an ingratitude: But, dear Lord, I do not reckon upon my tears, but upon your precious blood, both to satisfy for my sins, and to acknowledge your mercies as I ought. I beg that the same love which made you suffer for me, may continually draw tears from my heart for my ingratitude to you. Let your love, to which I abandon all my interest, act this for me. Consult it in all that concerns
me,

me, and give me what it requests of you for me.

In Time of Communion.

Consider that if you really desire worthily to acknowledge God's favours and mercies to you, you have the best of means, and indeed the only, which is Jesus Christ, who is willing to come into your heart, that you may thereby have in his person, wherewithal to offer to God what is worthy of him.

Affections.

O come, dear Lord, into my heart, for it is by your means only that I can worthily acknowledge God's infinite mercies to me, as well as learn to do it. Come, then, and teach me that duty. During your mortal life you gave me example of it, ever rendering thanks to your eternal Father; before you proceed to any action, inspire me with the like sentiments.

And since, for that end, you are pleased to come into my heart, give me leave to offer you to your eternal Father and mine, since he allows me the honour to call him so.

O eternal God! I offer you your only Son, Jesus Christ, to acknowledge your
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merciful

merciful goodness to me your unworthy creature; for he is mine by your free gift and his; I offer him then with my whole heart for your greater honour and glory, since nothing can more contribute to it.

O my sweet Saviour, who are so good as to visit me, unite me to yourself, that I may be but one with you by grace, and a perfect conformity of wills. Let the same fire that burns in your heart inflame mine. Make use of me as an instrument to glorify your eternal Father on earth, whilst you thank and praise him for me in heaven.

O love, immense and infinite! thaw the icy coldness of my heart; soften its hardness that you may find no more resistance in it to your holy inspirations. Inflame, dilate, and fortify my heart, and grant I may unmeasurably love you, for I cannot otherwise answer your love. I consecrate to you my life, my soul, and all that I am. Dispose of me and all that is mine according to your will; and let not my will be ever different from yours. I but desire your love, give me that and it is sufficient.

A Third Design our LORD had in instituting the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, was, that it might be an impetratory Sacrifice; by means of which we might obtain all necessary Graces to love and serve him; for which End we ought to offer it.

Our Lord promised us, that all the petitions we should make in his name, should be infallibly granted us. We can never be said to ask so properly in his name and by his merits, as when we present him to his eternal Father to be our petitioner; when his precious body and blood are actually upon our Altars, where his sacred blood pleads for us; the virtue of which is infinite, and the voice all-powerful to obtain all that is requested. What can God refuse us, when we offer him a God in payment for what we ask?

We are assured that the only Son of God is given us; he is then all ours; *Parvulus Filius datus est nobis*. Therefore when we assist at Holy Mass, we may offer him as ours, with all the divine acts which his soul then addresses to his eternal Father, and present them as our own. What a treasure have we then in hand! by means of which, we shall adore, give thanks, and pray by the prayers of Christ. How can we then
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but be heard? How rich is a soul that knows thus how to make use of the great treasure bestowed upon her! which is no less than Jesus Christ with all his merits. Let us then make use of it, to purchase all we want, begging with confidence all we stand in need of, for it is given us for that end.

O excess of goodness! who obliged him to be thus liberal to us! he in a worthy manner performs on our Altars, towards his eternal Father, what we are incapable of doing in a manner worthy of his Divine Majesty, and thereby supplies for all our defects. What cause of joy for us! since all his divine operations are ours, and performed for us. Since in giving himself to us, he gave us all he is, and all he has, without reserve,

It is by means of Holy Mass, that we gain strength to overcome all our enemies, and efficacious remedies to cure our wounds. And our souls are cleansed from the stains of sin, by the blood of the Lamb of God, there offered. Almighty God also affords a more special protection to such as are careful to assist thereat as often as they can. The Council of Trent assures us thereof in these words: *The Sacrifice of Mass does not only obtain us the gifts of penance, but man-
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nages for us the proper helps we have need of in the different conjunctures of this life. Many by means of Mass have overcome the temptations of the enemy that tempted their fidelity to God. One that was tempted to despair, and was upon the point of yielding, being advised by the person he declared it to, to hear Mass every day, which he had no sooner resolved upon, but he was entirely freed from the temptation.

Happy are they that are sensible of the vast advantage of assisting at Holy Mass; for it is the source of all sort of Good. What grace, what favour, what riches, spiritual and corporal, for time, and for eternity!

As with earthly kings and princes, it is all in all to address ourselves to them in a proper time when they are best disposed, and they are likely to be best disposed when great honours are done them. So in regard of God, the properest time to obtain of him what we desire, is the time of Holy Mass, by which he receives an infinite honour, and in which he takes an infinite complacence: which makes *St. Chrysostome* say, that of all times, Mass is the most advantageous time to negotiate with Almighty God. For how is it possible that God should refuse us any grace we ask, at the
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very moment he works so many wonders in our favour, and gives us his only Son, and the same Son offers himself in sacrifice for us.

To profit by it as we ought, our chief design must be to render to God that due honour which this sacrifice only can render him. Then to obtain pardon and remission of our sins, and the grace to overcome temptations, and to fulfil the duties of our state and employment as we ought. That peace may be maintained in our family, and that each may increase in perfection according to God's merciful designs.

An infinity of blessings are wanting to us, and we are oppressed with as many evils and miseries. We have in the sacrifice of Holy Mass, a treasure so great, that all blessings are contained in it, and an universal remedy against all our miseries; and for want of knowing how to make use of it, we are spiritually poor, and oppressed with miseries. In order then to make our advantage of our treasure, we may use the following method..

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The manner of assisting at Holy Mass, when we consider it as an impetratory sacrifice, for which end Christ instituted it, that we might thereby obtain all necessary graces to love and serve God.

AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS.

Consideration.

CONsider yourself in the presence of God as a poor beggar at the gate of a prince, infinitely rich, liberal, and powerful. Then reflect that Jesus Christ assures you that you shall obtain whatever you ask his Father in his name; and moreover that he will come down from heaven to join his prayers with yours, and to renew the Sacrifice of the Holy Cross for you, and apply the merits of it to you.

Affections.

O my God, I am sensible of my great poverty and wants, and of my many miseries in body and soul; of my infirmities and weakness in the one, passions and vicious inclinations in the other. My soul defiled with sin, my heart narrow for want of Divine Love. And in the little good I do,

do, there is so much dross caused by self-seeking, and self-love, that there will be little or nothing worthy of your regard; and what is most deplorable is, that I feel my miseries and wants, and cannot free myself from them.

Come then, my God, and drive away all that you dislike in me, for no less a power than yours can do it; cast out all that is hurtful to me, and cleanse my heart from all that loathsome corruption which dwells in it. Banish thence for ever the tyranny of self-love, under which I groan, together with all that is sensual; and since my heart is so narrow, enlarge it, I beseech you, to a capacity fit to entertain and love you.

O my God, since you have been pleased to give me your only Son, I cannot think you will refuse me what I ask, for he being mine by your free gift, I offer him to you with all his merits; which offering I am sure you will graciously accept; and after having received from me a present of so great value, what return may I not hope from you, who will not be outdone by any of your creatures. I dare affirm that whatever I can request, or you can give, will not be worth the victim I offer you; which raises my hopes to an assurance of obtain-
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ing what I ask : for what can you deny me, when I offer you your Divine Son ?

During the Epistle and Gospel. Consideration.

Reflect, that the source of all your evils is the darkness of your understanding thro' want of faith : which darkness is the cause of all you do amiss. For did you know and understand truth, and what God is, you would never cease to love him; and in all you did, you would seek him only and his interest, and by consequence could never offend him.

Affections.

O my God, the darkness I live in, for want of a sufficient light, is the chief cause of my misfortune and defects. I own it is a just punishment for my sins, and for my having so often slighted the light you gave me; refusing to make use of it as I ought, when it would have led me through virtue to felicity, and through grace to glory. I therefore have deserved to be deprived of it, and to have my understanding obscured with ignorance, and subject to deceit and error.

O pardon me, my God, and in your mercy now disperse those clouds of darkness

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and ignorance which overshadow me. Let your light shine with such piercing beams, as may not only illuminate my darkness, but also melt and inflame my heart, and make it fit to receive your impressions. Take from me that sadness which darkness breeds, and give me that spiritual cheerfulness and joy which no created good can give, nor evil deprive me of, and which you only can bestow. Give me a profound humility which springs from the light that shews me to myself as I am in your eyes. Let it humble but not deject me.

O did I believe, as I ought, that humility and sufferings is the secure way to glory, I should not have so great a repugnance to what is humbling, not so great a horror of the least suffering, mortification, or self-denial, since faith teaches me that it is the only way to heaven. All is possible to those that have faith, says our Lord, and one grain of it is sufficient to transport mountains. How can I then be said to have any, since I am not able to surmount the least difficulty? When shall I have it? When you, my God, shall please to bestow so precious a gift upon me; for unless you give it, I cannot have it. I beg it then, in the name of Jesus Christ your only Son, who is going to sacrifice himself for me

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on this Altar, for whose sake I beseech you to open and enlighten my understanding with your Divine Light, that I may comprehend the maxims of my salvation and perfection, and rectify my heart that I may cordially embrace the same.

At the Offertory. Consideration.

Let the bread and wine there offered mind you of your own soul and body; as that is offered to be changed into the body and blood of Christ, beg he will please to work in you a like change, transforming your soul and body into a resemblance of him.

Affections.

My Lord and my God, permit me to offer you my soul and body with the bread and wine that is offered you by the Priest your Minister, to the end it may be changed into the body and blood of your Son; so let me be changed into a resemblance of him. All is pure in him, and all profane in me. It was to reform what the malice of the devil and sin had defaced of your image, that my Saviour immolated himself on the cross, and it is for that he now sacrifices himself on our altars. Repair that

image in me with the precious blood that ran from the wounds of your Divine Son ; and with the water that issued from his sacred side, wash away all that defiles my soul. Change those perverse and inveterate inclinations which draw me to sin ; and in place of them, give me what may make me truly pleasing to you, as NN. change my tepidity into fervour, and my love of ease into an unalterable patience.

What will it cost you to work this change? one word from your sacred mouth will presently change the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of your Son ; add one more in my favour, and it will suffice to make a saint of a sinner. At the birth of time, as soon as you had pronounced that word, *Light be made*, it presently shined over the whole universe. Speak the same word in behalf of my understanding, and those thick clouds which darken it will at the same instant be dispersed. You commanded that the earth should produce flowers and fruits, and immediately it did so. O if you would but speak after that manner to my soul, though but one word with the absolute tone of Master, however barren it be, it would presently become fruitful in all sorts of good works. Say only, Behold my servant, and forth-
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with I shall have all the qualities of a good one; as real fidelity, prudence, &c. O that I could substitute myself in place of the bread and wine, to be changed in some sort into you! If you said of me, This is my body and my blood, what admirable effects would not those words work in me. At least please to say, This is my image, and I shall be truly so.

At the Elevation. Consideration.

Reflect that Jesus Christ descends from heaven upon your altars, to intercede in favour of you; and it is to obtain you the graces you stand in need of, that he renews the sacrifices he offered upon Mount Calvary.

Affections.

What joy for me, my most amiable Saviour, that you will please to descend from heaven to earth in this conjuncture, when your presence is so necessary. I adore and reverence you as my God, and I love you as my Saviour. You being both my Saviour and my God, what may I not hope for? I beseech you, have compassion on my miseries. Let not your descent from heaven to earth be in vain to me. What

can your heavenly Father refuse you in this state of victim? The profound respect with which in mortal flesh you petitioned his Divine Majesty, made you be ever heard; and when did you ever appear in his presence with more respect, and in a more humble posture, than at present? Speak then, dear Saviour, for me; let all your wounds, as so many mouths, plead my cause. Can you refuse me this at the very time you have the goodness to descend, and to sacrifice yourself for me upon the altar? that is what I cannot believe.

But as I know myself unworthy to be heard, having so often refused to hear and obey your voice, I implore the intercession of your Blessed Mother, and of your Holy Angels; and I assure myself, you will not refuse to hear them who never offended you in the least.

O sacred Queen of heaven and earth! you are the Mother of my Saviour, and you are also mine, though I am a sinner. Have as much compassion for me as you have power with your Son. Employ your credit in petitioning for me his unworthy member, and obtain me what you see I most want, to become truly pleasing to him and you.

O Holy Angels, make appear your love
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to me on God's account. Let not the advantage you enjoy in being disengaged from a corruptible body make you less compassionate the unhappy circumstances of a soul kept down by the weight of her corruptible body. Pray for me to your King and mine, and obtain me the entire victory over all his enemies and mine, both in life and death.

And be mindful also of our afflicted friends in purgatory: you who present the prayers of the saints before the throne of God, offer him this Sacrifice of Holy Mass to obtain their deliverance; especially of NN. who so ardently desire to sing the praises of God with you.

At the Pater noster. Consideration.

Remember, when you address yourself to the eternal Father by the Pater noster, to beg of him that divine nourishment you stand so much in need of, and prepare yourself for spiritual communion.

Affections.

Since you are pleased, my God, to look on me as your child, and to allow me to call you Father, I cannot but expect you will

will give me that celestial food I want. O my God, that I might be nourished with the divine victim which has now been immolated on our altar ! What joy and content would it be to me ! The wearied and thirsty stag desires not so much the cooling streams, as my heart does this victim which is the source of grace.

Come then, my amiable Saviour, the joy of my heart and life of my soul. I have asked a great many things of your eternal Father ; but provided I am so happy as to possess and keep you, I will request no more, for I have all things in you. You are my light, my refuge, my comfort, and my hope. In you are contained all the treasures of heaven : In you is true wisdom, power, and all happiness. What remains then to be wished or desired more, but only that you will please to remain continually with me whilst on earth, and that I may remain for ever with you in heaven ?

Then in the heart of Jesus, which you possess, and by the merits of it, beg of Almighty God all your spiritual wants, especially a happy death : And you may then accept of death for love of him who died for you, and to satisfy for all your offences against him.

A Fourth Design which our LORD had in instituting the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, was, that it might be a propitiatory Sacrifice to obtain Forgiveness of Sins, and satisfy for them in all Rigour of Justice.

A Sacrifice of Expiation, is what we offer to obtain remission of our sins. In sin there are two things; the guilt, which is the offence of God, and pain due to that offence. Sin, if mortal, is only blotted out by perfect contrition, or attrition joined with confession, and the punishment due to it, only by the painful exercise of penance, or by the application of the merits of our Saviour's life and death. One of the principal effects of Holy Mass, is to obtain us the grace of contrition, and to make us partakers of the merits of Christ, whose sacred body is offered for the sins of men, and for the pain due to them, and for that intention we ought to offer it.

What would have become of all mankind after the sin of Adam, had not the sacrifice offered on the cross appeased the anger of God, and satisfied for the injuries sin had done him? And since that, what would become of men who daily offend and injure God, if the same Redeemer did not daily continue to immolate himself
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for us upon our altars? By which he restores to his eternal Father the glory which all sinners, as far as they are able, be-
reave him of by their sins.

Though we should fast all our lives with bread and water, give all the treasures of the earth in alms, and employ ourselves in continual prayer, and that, to the end of ages, all this, weighed in the balance of divine justice, would not have the weight of one only Sacrifice of Holy Mass, which is of an infinite value; and all other things, in comparison of it, are as nothing.

With what confidence and comfort ought we to assist at Holy Mass, it being the most powerful means to satisfy entirely for our sins? Just the same as if we had been present at Calvary, and taking up the blood which fell from our Saviour's wounds to the ground, had offered it to his eternal Father, in satisfaction, and to have obtained pardon for all our sins. As we should not then have doubted of it, we ought no more to question it now, when at Holy Mass we offer the same blood unto his Divine Majesty, to satisfy for them. If with a firm faith and sincere sorrow we do so, there is no offence, however great, which this sacrifice will not wash away.

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Yet though the Sacrifice of Mass be of its own nature infinitely satisfactory for the punishment due to sin, nevertheless the quantity of the application is greater or lesser, according to the greater or smaller disposition of them for whom it is offered, or of them that are only present at it; it is what the words of the sacred Canon teaches; *whose faith and devotion is known to thee for whom we offer, and who offers unto thee.*

When you assist at Holy Mass, offer our Saviour's precious blood to the eternal Father, beseeching his Divine Majesty to receive the blood of his only Son, which you may offer as belonging to you by his free gift. Beg him to take it and pay himself therewith, for what you are indebted to him by your sins; and ask victory over them, and pardon for them. Have confidence that he will grant your request for his dear Son's sake, but acknowledge that having so long continued in sin, you deserve to die in it; nevertheless hope in that precious blood that pleads for you, and demands its price and salary, having been shed to cleanse you from your sins.

There is not a more powerful means to obtain true contrition than the Sacrifice of Holy Mass. Let sinners who desire their conversion

conversion come with confidence to it: Jesus Christ will speak in their favour, and will appease the just anger of his eternal Father, and obtain for them the gift of penance. This the Council of Trent teaches us.

It is not less certain that our Saviour communicates to us at Mass the satisfactions which he offered to his eternal Father for us, dying on the cross; insomuch that the pains we so justly deserve in punishment are diminished, if not entirely remitted, by virtue of the Sacrifice of Mass. And not only the living have part in this benefit, but also the souls in purgatory, for it is the most efficacious and infallible means to help and assist them.

The gift of penance being one of the fruits of this Sacrifice, sin ought not to hinder us from approaching, but rather should be a motive for our coming to it. For would it be just to hinder the sick from using remedies, or keep the dead from the source of life? It is by this Sacrifice that we obtain the grace of penance; and if sinners return from it as they come, without the least change, it is not because the blood of Jesus Christ did not cry for mercy in their favour, but because they rejected it.

A reason why we reap so little fruit from so powerful a means, is because we assist at it after so cold and tepid a manner. If we reflected, as we ought to do, that Christ labours there for our reconciliation with his eternal Father, as most certainly he does, should we not join with him? He there endeavours to repair the honour our sins snatch from his Divine Majesty, and to satisfy his offended justice. We ought then certainly to keep ourselves at least united to Jesus as much as possible during the time of Mass, that so the Sacrifice may be fully accomplished according to his merciful designs on us.

We must consider the Sacrifice of Mass as the monument of peace between God and us by means of Jesus Christ. The altar may put us in mind of Mount Calvary, where with his precious blood he cancelled our debts, and established us again in the grace and favour of his eternal Father, and the same he performs on our altars. If the least venial sin deserves death, we ought to die, else to find a victim to be sacrificed in our place; this victim is Christ, who dies daily, and is offered for the expiation of our sins.

O excess of goodness! my dear Redeemer, not content to have once paid the debt due

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for my sins, with the price of his precious blood shed on Mount Calvary, but daily continues to pay it by offering himself for the same end in the Sacrifice of Holy Mass. What can be compared to this charity? Who is like my Saviour in goodness, who gives himself and the treasures of his merits to pay what I owe for my sins.

A Manner of Hearing Mass when we consider it as a propitiatory Sacrifice for our Sins, for which End we must offer it.

Consideration.

WHEN the Priest is at the steps of the altar reciting the Confiteor, imagine yourself to appear in the sight of Almighty God all covered with sin, which is so detestable to him. Conceive a true confusion, and humbly acknowledge yourself a sinner, and incapable of repairing the injury you have done to God, or satisfying for your sins; then reflecting that Jesus Christ offers to satisfy his eternal Father for you, raise your hope and confidence in his goodness.

Affections.

My most dear Saviour, you are my only hope. Your presence puts fear and despair
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to flight ; it is in your sacred merits that I place all my trust and confidence. How great is my obligation to you, my dear Redeemer, for vouchsafing to be my bail, and to pay those debts which I could never have paid. If malice could have equalled so great a goodness, mine had done it, since, instead of spending my life in loving and serving so good a Lord, I have employed it in offending you.

How often have I abused your goodness, slighted your friendship, contemned your love, and turned the stream of mine (which you only can challenge and deserve) towards creatures ; thus preferring my own will to yours.

Behold here a copious subject for your pardon, and an ample object to exercise your mercy on. Pardon, O infinite Abyss of mercy, pardon the multitude of my offences. From the bottom of my soul I cry to you, I have sinned, and my sins are in number more than the hours of my life ; but though equal to the minutes I have lived, your mercy pardons all, and for one *Peccavi* from the heart are remitted ; O forgive my unfaithfulness. Besides your pardon for the past, give me amendment for the future. Give me grace by the merits of this Sacrifice to sin no more ; or if

fin be still necessary to suppress my pride, at least grant me a perfect contrition. Inkindle in my heart that flame charity, that I may love you purely for yourself.

O love of my God, which as much exceeds our love as you Lord excel us ! you witness it by dying for us, not only once, but daily dying mystically on our Altars. Give me a gratitude as ample as these benefits. Take from me what is mine, and odious, and give me what belongs to you. Give me an upright heart, and a will conformable to yours, and in all my thoughts, words, and actions, let me have no other aim but your will and greater glory.

O my God and Father ! but shall I dare call you so, after having so much offended you ? Being sensible of my unworthiness, I durst not do it, were it not for the precious Blood your Son shed, which he will here offer for me. If my sins provoke your just anger, his Blood will move your compassion. If you are deaf to my sighs and tears, you will not be so to his Blood, which cries louder than that of Abel, not for punishment but pardon of my crimes. Besides I know you had rather be esteemed the Father of mercy than the God of vengeance ; all which makes me hope that you will not reject a contrite and humble heart ;

heart; especially when presented by your Son, who, as our High Priest, is going to immolate himself in favour of me; for his sake receive me again as your child. Say to the ear of my heart, *You are my child*, which words will give a new life, and breathe a better soul into me. Imprint in my heart and actions the character of a good child; and give me not only that which children use to want and Fathers bestow, but give me what the depth of my necessity requires, and the greatness of your goodness knows how to give. Change my heart into that temper which may please you most. Give me a humility as profound as the nothing from whence I came, or rather as deep as the abyss into which my sins have cast me. Renew in me your image which by sin I have defaced, and destroy all that is offensive in me, and make me what I ought to be, for to be your worthy child. Let neither pleasure, fear, nor force startle me from my duty, or make me offend you.

In Time of the Epistle and Gospel.

Consideration.

Reflect, that all your sins are breaches of God's law, which you ought to have

inviolably

inviolably observed. How ungrateful have you been to have preferred to it the law of flesh and blood, and of your own will. Beg grace, that for the future you may make the Divine Law the rule of all your actions.

Affections.

O my God, in hearing your law read, do I not hear my condemnation? since I have not made it the rule of my life, nor preferred it before all things, as I ought to have done, but, on the contrary, have preferred my own will and the law of flesh and blood. I have not only omitted to do what it ordained, but have also done what it forbids. I know my faults exceed all pardon and mercy but yours, which is infinite, and which your goodness excites my heart to hope for, and my tongue to ask. For though your facility in pardoning be so great, yet it behoves me humbly to ask it; I will then make it the first of my many requests.

Pardon, O infinite goodness, what none else will. You have writ my pardon in bloody characters, let not the black ingratitude of my sins have force to blot it out. Had I as many lives to give as you have received wounds, all would be too small a ransom

ransom to redeem my sins, and too poor an offering of thanksgiving for my redemption and your sufferings.

Grant, my dear Lord, that for the future no terror may have power to make me sin, no torment to remove me, nor pleasure to entice me from your love. Take me wholly to yourself, but better me in the taking. Take soul and body; let my body be immured with your law, and my soul centered in yourself; that the one may never more transgress, nor the other have any motion but from you. Put your mark upon me, imprint the sign of *Tau* upon my forehead, that wherever I go, it may be visible that I am yours.

But how dare I petition so great a favour after such great infidelities? It is the confidence I have in your goodness that encourages me; for did I not believe you were more prone to mercy than to justice, I should not have presumed to ask it.

At the Offertory. Consideration.

Reflect that all your evils come from preferring a sensual life before a spiritual one; which the bread and wine may represent to you as sustaining the corporal life. Be confounded, and beg grace to do otherways for the future.

Affections.

Affections.

My God, confiding in the merits of the victim that is going to be offered to you; I hope, and beg pardon for the too great tenderness and care I have taken of this body of corruption, which has caused most of my faults. Passion and sensual pleasures have drawn me to sin; and yet, though I know them to be enemies who conspire my ruin, I cannot resolve to declare war against them. Assist me, my God, with your all-powerful grace; for as it is impossible for me to rise from my ill habits and my self-love without your help, so neither can I stand, that is, be faithful to you, without the continuance of your mercies. Grant me both through the merits of Christ your Son, and my sweet Saviour, who is going to sacrifice himself for me.

My dear Saviour, blessed be this hour in which you are going to offer to your eternal Father, for my salvation, and the remission of my sins, the greatest of sacrifices, that is yourself. A far less sacrifice from so great a Priest, could not chuse but find acceptance. What then may I not hope from this, in which you are not only the Priest that offers it, but also the victim that is offered.

I hope for no less than pardon of my
sins,

sins, and all that may be for your glory, and my soul's good ; as a pious life, and a most happy death ; the accomplishment of all your merciful designs over me: and that you will please to change my heart into a heart that may resemble yours, and be according to your desire. I purely desire this, that it may be less unworthy to be presented to you. Imprint your law in it, and give me the grace to observe it, and to cause it to be observed. Bless, and look favourably upon all in this Family, and give them all that your mercy has designed for them, as also to all my friends and relations. Make them your faithful servants, and grant them the grace to live holily and die happily.

At the Elevation. Consideration.

Represent to yourself Jesus Christ fastened to a Cross, to expiate the sins of all mankind. Consider in his passion, as in a faithful mirrour or glass, how enormous sin is. At this spectacle, excite your heart to conceive so great a sorrow of them, as never more to commit them.

Affections.

O my soul! what is represented to us by
the

the body of Christ on the one side and his blood on the other, and himself lifted up in the Host, but his Sacred death on the Cross? all that our eyes behold here, is a lively representation of the bloody Tragedy acted upon Mount Calvary.

My divine Saviour, after having adored you as my God, permit me to ask you what has reduced you to this deplorable condition? 'tis sin; 'tis to expiate the disobedience found in all the sins of mankind, that you are obedient even to the death of the cross; as also to satisfy for the pains they deserve, that you suffer such sad torments.

O infinite goodness, to suffer so much for me your enemy, who had a hand in all you suffer! 'twas not so much Judas that betrayed you, as my treacherous heart; not so much the soldiers that struck, reviled, and spit upon you, as did my passions. 'Twas my sensuality that scourged you; my gluttony that gave you gall; in short, 'twas my sins that nailed you to the cross, drew all the blood from your veins, and bereaved you of life.

Lord, what have I done in sinning? taken away your life, and crucified you anew. After such proceedings, I might with reason despair, did I not hear you pray upon the cross for your Crucifiers, which prayer cannot

cannot fail to be heard, and to obtain what it asks, and that is the pardon of my sins. Add to this favour the grant of N N. and a true and perfect sorrow for having ever offended you, which may preserve me from doing it again. I here offer myself in satisfaction for my sins, and to suffer for your love whatever you please, provided you will grant me your love and your grace, which I most heartily beg through the merits of this Sacrifice; and that you will please to unite all I shall do and suffer to your sacred merits; without which, all I can perform will avail me nothing.

At the Agnus Dei. Consideration.

Be persuaded that you can never better atone, and satisfy for your sins, than by offering Christ and his Sacred Merits (which you possess in communion) both to his eternal Father, and to himself. 'Tis likewise the most efficacious means to preserve you from falling into sin. Therefore whenever you offer up the Sacrifice of holy Mass for your sins, fail not to communicate at least spiritually.

Affections.

Come my most amiable Jesus, come; for you come chiefly for sinners. Come then
to

to me who am the most unworthy of them. But before you enter to make your offering, consecrate the temple of my heart so much defiled by sin, and profaned by the idol self-love. Break and destroy that enemy of yours; and since all things are possible to you, change the love I bear myself into your love, and so make a great saint of a great sinner.

Pardon, dearest Lord, my sins and misdemeanors for your mercy's sake, for tho' I do not deserve it, yet you having merited it for me, I request it on your score. You have done abundantly more than sufficient to satisfy for all my debts; I therefore lay claim to pardon. Grant it me then, since I can pay you more than enough; for I give you, dear Jesus, your death and passion, which you have given me, with the which you must needs be satisfied, and I cleared from guilt.

What will you lose by forgiving me? Who will blame you for that mercy? On the contrary, you will acquire great glory by it; for it is ever more glorious to your name to save than to condemn; it is therefore I beg it. Pardon that vast multitude of my sins which I have incurred, partly through ignorance, but much more thro' wilfulness; in both I have offended you.

Cure

Cure also those wounds they have caused in me; your wisdom knows the depth of them; your power is able, and your goodness, I am sure, is willing, which gives me hopes much larger than my fears have been.

The inveteracy of no disease can make resistance, if you command all maladies will obey you. Say to me only, as to the leper, *volo mundare*, that word will restore me to perfect health: For as your word alone created me, so your word can again repair me. No distemper can remain in me, if you will but say you will have me be freed. Take away the cause, pull up the root, self-love, which is the origin of all.

I know you more desire what I ask, than I do who ask it: grant it me then, to fulfil your desire. Give me also love, and a true zeal of your glory; but give me plenty, for I cannot be satisfied with a little, nor is it glorious for your name to give sparingly. My Jesus do this for me, and let me know what you desire of me, and I will bestow the remainder of my life in performing it: Or if you think fit to punish me for my sins and misdemeanors, I beg it may be so, as to correct and not

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harden

harden me, as to bring me to you, and not drive me from you.

*Motives to raise our Esteem of HOLY MASS,
and to dispose us to profit by it.*

Mass is the golden key of heaven, God the Father gives it you, and with it we may have all other blessings if we will. If then we find ourselves poor in virtue the fault must be ours, for God, by this key, opens his treasures to us, and would liberally bestow them upon us, did we not hinder him by not disposing ourselves to receive them. If we draw but little advantage from Holy Mass, it is our own fault; if our debts are still great, it is a sign we do not take care to pay them by the means God has so bountifully furnished us with.

St. Chrysostome says that the Angels are so well acquainted with the efficacy of the Mass, that they are in expectation till it begins, judging it the most favourable opportunity to obtain favours for us of Almighty God.

All the value and efficacy which was originally in the bloody sacrifice on the cross is entirely translated to the unbloody
sacrifice

sacrifice of the Mass, by which sacrifice the former is applied.

Though our sins are forgiven by absolution, there commonly remains some temporal punishment to be undergone either here or in Purgatory. Holy Mass, if well made use of, is abundant satisfaction to the Divine Justice for our debts, though never so great. What a comfort ought this to be to those who, by reason of their natural constitution, are not able to practise many or great austerities; and what return should we make to our Saviour for the same.

If our devotion, in assisting at Mass, be great, our advantage will be also great; if little, it will be but little. We may gain more by hearing one Mass devoutly, than by twenty without devotion.

The Sacrifice of Holy Mass is but the general and particular means to give ourselves entirely to God, and to ask and receive from him all sort of graces. Endeavour daily to assist thereat; first, that you may worthily honour and adore God in all the extent of his divine perfections, and him for all the graces and favours his mercies have, and do daily bestow upon all his creatures; particularly on yourself and all that relates to you, as each one of

his family, and to satisfy his justice for all your own sins, and to obtain of his goodness those gifts and graces necessary not only for yourself, but for all those for whom he has shed his most precious blood.

The reason why we profit so little by Holy Mass is, because we go to it with so little sense of the immense treasures which are communicated to us by means of it: as if the blood of a God were a thing of small account to merit us heaven, to obtain us pardon for our sins, to appease the Divine Justice, and to acknowledge worthily the favours God hath done us, and his love for us in the most blessed Sacrament; all which is performed by the means of Holy Mass.

That you may reap the intended profit for your soul, you must prepare yourself daily for hearing Mass, as if you were to communicate; that is, with as great purity as you can; and beg our Lord, who instituted this great Sacrifice, to renew the memory of his death and passion, and the efficacy of it, to grant you the grace, not only to assist at it, but also to partake of this divine mystery according to his merciful designs.

And

And to partake more fully of the efficacy of Holy Mass, when we consider it as a Sacrifice of propitiation for our sins, we must make acts of sorrow for them.

And when we offer it as an impetratory Sacrifice, we must actually request something in general or particular; otherways we let the credit of the Son of God, which is communicated to us, remain useless and unprofitable. For as we all want merits which might find credit with God, we must not omit to offer those which Christ gained by the Sacrifice he offered on the Cross, which he has given to us, and they are applied and communicated to us by the Sacrifice of the Altar.

Whenever we have any thing to ask of Almighty God, the true and best means to obtain it is to request it in consideration of the masses that are said upon earth, and in respect of the merits of the Son of God, which are applied to us by means of them.

*An Oblation of the Sacrifice of Holy Mass,
to be made before Mass.*

My God, I acknowledge that I merit not so much as the least of your favours, and that I have nothing which can move you

to unlock your treasures, or bestow upon me what I stand in need of. But since Jesus my Saviour has made me heir of all the merits of his life and death, and applies them to me by the Sacrifice of Holy Mass; I offer them to you, and by them beg that you will please to grant me all that is necessary for my Sanctification, and the perfection you require of me; together with a perfect contrition which may wash away all my sins; also your love, in which I may live and die; and all virtues that are suitable to my vocation, and those natural and supernatural talents necessary for the amplification of your honour and glory; and the comforts of this life in such a degree as may be necessary for my Salvation.

I also beg the conversion of sinners, the perseverance of the Just, the Sanctification of those that are under my care, the exaltation of our Holy Mother the Church, the extirpation of heresies; the consolation of the afflicted, the prosperity of my parents and relations; the pardon of my enemies: and that you will please to shower down your blessings upon our holy Father the Pope, and all Christian Princes; especially upon our King, Queen, and Prince: and grant that England, and all misbelieving

lieving kingdoms, may be converted to the true faith. 'Tis through the merits of all the masses that will this day be offered throughout the whole world, that I beg the grant of these my requests. Look not on my unworthiness, but on the merits of your well-beloved Son, which are sufficient to render the most unworthy most deserving of your favours.

Shew therefore, O Eternal Father, in this occasion, both your justice, and the efficacy of your Son's merits: give him that due recompense, which I do not deserve; I ask it in his name, and behold him coming upon this Altar to join his prayers with my petition, therefore your honour is engaged to hear him, and to render yourself favourable to those whom he commands to ask in his name, and to whom he communicates his merits and credit. Behold I am one of them: honour him therefore, I beseech you, by granting me what both he and I most earnestly beg of your Divine Majesty, which is my salvation, and all the aforesaid requests, as far as they may conduce to your greater glory.

An

An Oblation of the Circumstances of Holy Mass, which are the prayers and ceremonies that we may partake thereof.

My God, I unite myself with the Priest whom your Church sends as Embassador to your Divine Majesty; I join myself to all the praises he shall give you, and to all the adorations he shall render you, and prayers he shall address to you; and to all the good desires he shall conceive. And I beg to partake of the spiritual food he is to receive.

A Method for bearing Mass according to the four Intentions for which CHRIST instituted it, and our Holy Mother the Church offers it.

FROM the beginning of the Mass till the Gospel employ yourself in making acts of repentance for your manifold sins committed against God, considered as your God, your King, and your Father.

From the Gospel till *Sanctus* bestow in acts of thanksgiving for the many great benefits you have received; especially for that of communicating himself to you in the adorable Sacrament.

From

From *Sanctus* till after the last *Elevation* bestow in oblation of this dreadful Sacrifice, saying, great God receive this holy Sacrifice in which your Son offers himself, and is offered by the Priest to render you due homage and worthy thanks for all your benefits. Receive here also the entire Sacrifice which I make of myself; of my body, of my soul, and of all that I am: which I have united with that of your dear Son, for whose sake receive me, and the promises made for me at Baptism, together with those I made at my profession, which I here renew, and beg by the precious blood of Christ, which I adore on the Altar, grace to fulfil them perfectly.

From that time till *Agnus Dei*, make petitions for all you want, and first ask to be freed from the evils that may be a hindrance to your salvation; and which you have reason to fear, both during life and at your death.

Then beg, through the merits of Christ, all that may conduce to God's glory, and your own good; as pardon of your sins, the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, and a perfect conformity to God's will. A pure intention in all you do; a pious life, and a happy death.

Pray

Pray for your Friends, and for each one of the Family you are in, that God will please to bring them to that degree of sanctity and perfection, which his mercies have designed them; and keep them all united in perfect peace and charity.

Offer your requests for our holy Mother the Church; beg her exaltation, and the extirpation of heresy; true repentance for sinners, a happy death for those that are near or in their agonies; and release from purgatory for the faithful departed, especially N N.

From *Agnus Dei* till the last blessing, employ in preparing for, and making your spiritual Communion. Produce the proper acts, to wit, humility, contrition, and a great desire of receiving your Divine Saviour. For which you may use these or the like affections. :

My sweet and amiable Jesus, I am not worthy that you should think of me, and you not only think of me, but also offer yourself to me in the Holy Eucharist, having an ardent desire to enter my heart, and to remain for ever with me. How great and admirable are your mercies! how excessive is your goodness! what is there in me capable to invite you? or rather, what is there not in me to disgust you

you from coming to me ? you can find nothing in me but crimes, infidelities to your grace, tepidities in your service, and yet you desire to lodge in my heart !

Come then, dear Jesus, come, for I truly desire you ; come into my heart, and form it according to yours. Annihilate that pride, self-love and self-will, which you find in it, and all other evil inclinations which displease you : and in place of them establish your humility, meekness, obedience, zeal, and whatever may render me agreeable to your eyes. Grant me the grace to seek no other happiness but the accomplishment of your will ; and your greater glory in myself, and those under my care, that so I may express my love to you. By your precious Blood I beg this grace, and that I may suppress all self-seeking, and interest which may anyways oppose the same.

Considering with the eyes of faith Jesus Christ in you by his Divine Spirit, return him your most grateful thanks, saying,

O Jesus, with my whole heart, I most humbly thank you for all your favours and mercies to me ; and above all, for the frequent visits you have made me in this adorable Sacrament : and for descending this day from your throne of glory to our Altar,

Altar, to be the food and nourishment of my soul, which I beseech you to take full possession of, and dwell for ever in my heart.

At the last blessing, beg the Father to bless you, the Son to protect you, and the Holy Ghost to sanctify you. May the blessing of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be upon me, and all I shall do; and remain so for ever, Amen.

During the last *Gospel*, give thanks for the favour granted you of assisting at Holy Mass, saying,

My Lord, God, and Saviour, I praise and thank you, and desire that all the Saints and Angels may bless and glorify you in my behalf, for those amorous thoughts you had for me from all eternity, and for all the graces you have bestowed on me by means of this great Sacrifice; and for granting me the favour of being present at it. Increase in me your love and grace, and grant that during this day I may pass no hour without elevating my heart and thoughts to you, as a grateful return for so great a blessing. Take possession of my heart, for it belongs to you alone.

We

We may very much enrich ourselves if every morning, and every hour of the day, we offer all the Masses that are said that day and night throughout the whole world for the four ends for which it was instituted, and is offered: for so we shall render ourselves partakers of the fruit of them all. And there is no hour of the day or night in which Mass is not said in some part of the world.

Whenever we have any thing to ask of God, the best means to obtain it, is to request it in consideration of the Masses that are said upon earth, and in respect of the merits of the Son of God, which are applied to us by means of them.



Whoever makes Use of these Methods for Holy Mass, I beg they will have the Charity, for God's Sake, to join me with themselves, and my Necessities with theirs: that in their Act of Repentance for their Sins, they will deplore and beg Pardon for mine: in their Thanksgiving, that they will render Thanks to God for his Mercies to me: in their Oblation, offer my Heart and Soul to God: and in their Petition beg for me what they request for themselves, especially the divine Grace

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and

and love. And as I hope the Use of these Methods will be in Vigour when I am dead, I entreat their Charity to be mindful of my poor Soul in Time of Holy Mass.



Motives to move us to hear Mass for the poor Soul in Purgatory.

We ought to be persuaded that we cannot exercise charity in a manner more pleasing and agreeable to Almighty God, or more profitable to ourselves, than in offering this sacrifice for the souls in Purgatory. If therefore we give to them those satisfactions we could appropriate to ourselves, we shall be well repaid for it. First, by the merit we shall have for that act of charity; and secondly, by the gratitude of those souls in praying for us when they are in heaven.

When we resolve to give them this great advantage, we may do it in this following manner:

O my Lord and Saviour, since you are pleased to charge yourself with the sins of all, and to pay with your precious Blood the pains justly due to them, be pleased to offer to your eternal Father
the

the torments of your Passion in exchange for those which the souls in Purgatory suffer.

I beg you will mercifully shorten, and, if it may be, put an end to the pains which they suffer. 'Tis with my whole heart that I give them the satisfactions which your goodness would apply to me by virtue and means of this Sacrifice. Since, dear Lord, I can give you nothing, for what do you stand in need of? I esteem myself happy in contributing something to the solace of your Friends and Servants; those Holy souls who feel those devouring flames burn with an ardent desire to see you. What happiness for me, thus to contribute to it!

And you, O Holy Souls, when you shall be in possession of that heavenly kingdom prepared for you, treat with Almighty God in my behalf, and obtain for me the same possession. Amen.

A MANNER OF
HEARING MASS,

In Honour of the Incarnation and Nativity of our Saviour ; to be used on the 25th of each Month, that being the Day of the Month that Jesus Christ was incarnate, and born for Love of us.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MASS.

WHen the priest descends the steps of the Altar, reflect how the world had been irrecoverably lost, if the word of God had not been pleased to descend from heaven into the womb of the blessed Virgin, and become man to redeem us from eternal Misery.

Render thanks to the most blessed Trinity, for being pleased to make use of so admirable a means to work our Salvation. Thank God the Father for loving the world so much as to give his only Son for it. Thank God the Son for abasing himself so far, as to cloath himself with our flesh, and subject himself to our miseries. Thank God the Holy Ghost for operating this so admirable a mystery ; and for forming of the blessed virgin's purest blood the
body

body of Christ, which afterwards was to be nailed for us upon a Cross.

At the Gloria in Excelsis.

Reflect how all the Angels in heaven celebrated a feast at the moment the word was incarnate; rejoicing that by that means men would fill up the vacant places, caused by the fall of Lucifer and his followers. What ought to be our joy who have so great an interest in it!

But this advantage, we must understand, regards only persons of good-will; that is, of a will conformable to God's will, docile to his voice, and who faithfully practise his law. Endeavour to be of that number.

At the Offertory.

Consider how Jesus Christ, from the first moment of his conception, cloathed with human nature, as with sacerdotal vestments, begins his Sacrifice. My God, said he, you would have no more oblations nor victims, but you have formed me a body. Holocaust and Sacrifices are no more agreeable to you for sin; then, said I, behold I come, as it stands written at the

beginning of the book. I come, my God, to do your will.

Since Jesus Christ is willing to be immolated for your sins, conceive a firm hope to obtain remission of them; beg him to offer himself again for those you have lately committed, that you may obtain pardon for them, and the grace of a sincere repentance and contrition.

Grieve that it was not in your power to consecrate yourself to Almighty God from the first moment that your soul animated your body. At least, offer yourself now to Jesus Christ, united to him as a member of his mystical body; and resolve to sacrifice the remainder of your life to the accomplishment of his divine will.

At the Canon of the Mass.

Call to mind the longing desires of the Patriarchs and Prophets, to see the Messiahs, and the continual sighs sent up to heaven to beg him to hasten his coming. Join yours to theirs, and press our Saviour to descend upon the Altar, saying with those holy souls, O heaven, grant us the just man we expect; he will be to us as a refreshing dew, and will render our souls fruitful of all good works.

At

At the Consecration.

At the very moment that the Priest pronounces the words of Consecration, imagine how the Angels in great numbers descend with their Lord King: *We announce to you great joy, for this day your Saviour is born for you.*

Acknowledge him and adore him under the appearance of bread and wine. It is the same God whom the blessed Virgin held in her arms, wrapt in swaddling clouts and laid in a manger.

At the Division of the Host.

When the Priest parts the Host, call to mind the painful Circumcision of our Saviour. See how at the same moment that he takes the name of Jesus, he does the office, shedding his blood for our salvation. Desire ardently to receive that Sacred Blood into your heart, one drop of it is capable to sanctify the whole world. Reflect what may be the reason why, after having so often received it, you remain still the same.

At

At the Agnus Dei.

Reflect that it is not without mystery that Jesus Christ is born in a stable, which is to signify that there is no heart, however poor and vile it be, which he disdains to enter, provided it desires his coming, and disposes itself for the same. Secondly, reflect that he is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed on the Cross for our sins, and is desirous, on the Altar of our heart, to offer himself again to his Eternal Father for the same end.

Prepare yourself for this Divine Victim, that your soul may be fed with the Body and Blood of the Innocent Lamb.

At the End of Mass.

After having received him really or spiritually, entertain your Divine Saviour, and beg him to remain hidden in your heart as he was at Nazareth, that so he may help you to labour and work as he did his blessed parents; and work with you joining his hand to yours, without which, acknowledge that nothing will be done well.

Resolve as much as he shall, by his grace enable you, to be watchful, and careful

to

to secure him from the persecutions which daily and hourly will be raised against him, attempting at his life: For sin, as well as Herod, seeks to destroy him. See how you may defend him, and arm yourself against that monster.

A Manner of Assisting at HOLY MASS, considering our Death as a Holocaust and Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. It is to prepare us for Death, Mass being the most proper Time for that Preparation, since it is a Commemoration of CHRIST's Death, in which his Merits are applied to us.

CONsider your death as a Holocaust or Sacrifice of Praise, to adore and worship the greatness of God. Endeavour to render it so by acts conformable, and therein employ yourself from the beginning of Mass till the *Sanctus*.

At the Beginning of Mass.

Consideration.

Reflect that sacrifices were ordained to honour God, who is infinite in all kinds, containing in himself all greatness and excellency; which to honour worthily, it ought

ought to be with the destruction and sacrifice of our lives; life being the greatest thing we have of ourselves to offer.

Affections.

My God, though my death is inevitable, yet in acknowledgment of your sovereign dominion over me, and for love of you, I am resolved, as much as in me lies, to make it voluntary; and, therefore, I now freely offer myself to it: So that could I avoid dying, I would not, that by my death I may make restitution of all I am to your Divine Majesty who gave it me. I rejoice that by death I shall be no more in a condition to resist your will and dominion over me as Lord and Maker. I accept of death in punishment for my having so often done it.

My God, I acknowledge and confess before heaven and earth, that you only are him *that is*, and I rejoice at it with my whole heart; and I, poor creature, am her *that is not*. I embrace, with humble submission, the destruction of my body, which by death is to return to dust or nothing from whence you drew it. I humbly adore the decrees of your providence, and submit to whatever you have
been

been pleased, from all eternity, to ordain concerning my death. And because I know not what will then be the sentiments of my soul, I desire now to perform that which I wish then to do, and beg you will be pleased to accept it now for that time.

I adore you, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one in essence and three in persons, and I love you with my whole heart. I acknowledge you as Author and Principal of my life, both of nature and grace. I firmly believe all you have said, and as firmly hope all you have promised, because you are truth itself, and can neither deceive nor be deceived. You are an infinite Good, containing in yourself whatsoever is good; therefore I love you above all things, and that purely for yourself.

It is for your sake alone, my God, who are infinitely amiable, and can never be sufficiently loved, that I detest all my sins, because contrary to your sanctity. I detest them for the same motive that Christ our Lord detested them in the garden of Gethsemani; and for the same motive that my God detests them, I offer you, in reparation of the affronts you have received by them, the love with which your only
Son

Son and his blessed Mother loved you, and the love with which all the Just upon earth, and Saints and Angels in heaven love you, and with which you love yourself.

I desire that the last motion of my heart may be an act of adoration to pay you due homage for my being, and an act of love whereby loving you for yourself, and in the last moment of my time, I may continue to love you for eternity.

I adore your power which created me, your goodness which redeemed me, your providence which has care of me, and your mercy which has pardoned me so many offences. I adore also your justice, and abandon myself to it, but with this confidence, that your goodness and mercy will never forsake me, but plead for me before your justice; and obtain that I may for all eternity sing forth your mercies. Full of this sweet and amorous confidence, I hope to see and enjoy your blessings in the land of the living, of which you are the resurrection and the life.

At the Offertory. Consideration.

Reflect that Christ not only offered his life and merits upon Mount Calvary for
your

your salvation, and to purchase for you all you shall want for that effect, but he is also pleased to do the same upon our altars : Now what is more necessary for salvation than a happy death ? Confide therefore, since he will obtain it for you.

Affections.

Innumerable are the thanks I owe you, my dear Redeemer, for thus sacrificing yourself for me ; all I can offer in return, is my life, which I offer as a victim to honour you ; and that it may be worthy of your acceptance, I unite it with yours, which you offered for me on the Cross, and are now going to offer for me here. Let the fire of your love consume this victim, that so it may be grateful to you.

O infinite Goodness ! you are all love. Loving me, though so unworthy, with an infinite love. I give you my heart, fit it for yourself, and fill it with your love, that so from this instant it may of sinful become holy. I offer myself a Holocaust, that is, my life with all the objects of it. All I have or could love in it, all the satisfactions I could draw from it, all which I freely offer to you ; destroy both them and me by death ; so that if it please

I

you

you to take my life this moment, I readily submit to it, and truly desire to die now, that I may enjoy you, and be no more in danger of offending you.

But if it be your will and pleasure to leave me yet some time in this dark prison of my body, grant me the grace from this instant to love nothing but you, whose love has redeemed me, and bought me with no less a price than your precious blood, as a condemned criminal begged from the gallows for experience: but what experience, dear Lord? To try if, after such preventions, I could come to love you. O work that love in me, and destroy all that opposes it. Let it take up all my thoughts, actions, and affections, and in a word my whole heart.

From Sanctus till Agnus Dei, consider your Death as a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving.

MOTIVES to accept and offer it as such.

God requires Sacrifices of Thanksgiving, under pain of withdrawing his affection and favours from us. St. Bernard speaking of ingratitude, says, that it dries up the fountain of goodness, the dew of mercy, and the current of God's graces.

If you desire not to be guilty of it, offer to God the sacrifice of your life, and with it all that might be a pleasure and contentment in it, as a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. Rejoice that you have *that* to offer in return for what God has bestowed upon you, and desire that you may soon offer it.

Affections.

O my God! How great are your benefits to me, both in number and worth, and how kind your way of bestowing them on me. If I should spend every moment of my life in thanksgiving, yet I should not be able to return due thanks for one single benefit; for, besides those favours common to all your creatures, your particular providence has been most liberal to me; in my education, my vocation, the innumerable and powerful helps you have given me for my salvation continued by you, though neglected by me. The many dangers, both of soul and body, which you have secured me from, preserving me from death, when in the state of sin, &c. add one more to these, I beseech you, which is a happy death.

Accept, in thanksgiving, the sacrifice of my life, and all I am and have, which by death I sacrifice to you. And I desire now actually to offer it, if such be your divine will and pleasure; if not now, whenever you please. In the mean-time I offer the sacrifice and myself to be sacrificed; and I wish I could every moment offer the same, and had I a million of lives, I would offer each of them a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. Accept, my God, this free and willing oblation I make you of my life, and with it all earthly enjoyments; for were it in my power to avoid death, yet I would die in return of thanks for all your favours and mercies to me; and especially for your having died for me: for whatever else I offer it is still but part of your gifts, but by death I sacrifice all.

At the Elevation.

Consideration.

Having adored Jesus lifted up by the hands of the Priest, as he was on the Cross, call to mind that when he was upon earth he said these words: *no man can shew a greater love than to give his life for him*

him he loves. This Christ has done for you ; love and gratitude obliges you to do the same for him.

Affections.

O my God, since love has made you die for me, it is but just that with a good will I accept of death for love of you. Had I a thousand lives, I would give them all to acknowledge this your love to me. I embrace death in return ; and rejoice that this body of sin will be by it destroyed in punishment for my having offended your goodness. Let earth return to earth, but grant that my soul created to your image, and redeemed with your Blood, may return to you. This is what I earnestly beg, recommending it *now* for *then* into your sacred hands.

I do most humbly thank you for all your benefits, as I desire to do at the last moment of my life ; in which possibly I may be deprived of both speech and reason : and therefore not able to speak, or even think of you. Therefore be pleased now to receive my thanksgiving for all your benefits to me, general and particular, known and unknown ;

but above all for that Blood and life you offered for me on Mount Calvary, and daily offer on our Altars, allowing me the happiness to be present, and applying to my soul the merits thereof, through means of the Sacraments. For all which I offer all the adorations, praises, and thanksgiving, which the humanity of my Saviour and his blessed Mother rendered to you, O Eternal Father! and those which all the Saints and Angels have, and will render you for all eternity. And all the Sacrifices of Mass, which have been, are, or shall be offered you till the day of judgment.

And when in my Agony I shall not be able to adore, praise, and thank you my God, I desire still to be united to all those that do it both in heaven and on earth. And I offer *now* for *then* my agony, my sweat, and my sufferings; to be joined and united to the bitter agony, the bloody sweat, and dolorous sufferings of my dying Saviour, for the remission of my sins, and for the eternal glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: whose name be for ever praised, and will for ever be done, in me, and by me, for all eternity.

O my God ! I abandon myself to your Divine will ; and to the judgment you shall pronounce on my soul : and I submit to it with my whole heart, confiding in your goodness that you will save a soul, you have loved so much as to send your only Son for its redemption and salvation.

For Communion.

Consideration.

Reflect how the same Jesus Christ, present on the Altar, has said : that he who shall eat his flesh shall live for eternity, and shall not die for ever. Beg that this may be fulfilled in you ; and confide it will be so, since you have his word for it.

Affections.

How comes this happiness to me, that my God should vouchsafe to visit me ! Lord I am not worthy that you should enter my soul, speak only the word, and my soul shall be saved. I firmly believe whatever you have said, and therefore, unworthy as I am, I desire to receive you,
that

that so I may be made worthy to live for ever with you. Grant that this heavenly food may be to me a preservative against all my enemies at the hour of my death, and that I may receive it with the dispositions most pleasing to you. And since you are pleased to promise that those who eat your flesh, and drink your Blood, shall not die for ever; I confide in your mercy, that I shall not die that eternal death: and I beg that whilst I live I may never die by sin, which I dread more than any temporal death.

My Saviour and redeemer, the Sovereign object of my heart! take possession of its affections. Sanctify my soul, and replenish it with your grace; to the end that all the remaining moments of my life may be entirely spent in your love.

I desire now to die, having received my God and Saviour; that separated from all earthly things, and from this my body; I may for ever be united to you with an unchangeable affection. Jesus, my Jesus, be to me a Jesus especially in my last hour; and fortify me in my passage out of this world, against all your enemies and mine.

Then

Then take, as it were, an oath of allegiance; renew your vows, and the promises made for you at Baptism. Beg your Sovereign Lord never to leave you. Say to him, with the Disciples of Emaus,

Stay with me Lord, for it is late, the best part of my life being spent, and the evening of it now approaches. Or else with holy Simeon: let your servant depart now in peace, for not only my eyes have seen, but my Heart has received the Author of my Salvation. And with the Royal Prophet: although I walk in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because you, my Lord, are with me.

Put yourself, dear Lord, as a seal upon my heart, that nothing but you may find entrance there; I unite this Communion with that I shall make at my death; and both with that you made before your death: and also with the Communions of our blessed Lady, and all your Saints during their lives, that those may supply for all the faults I have, or ever shall commit in receiving you.

I beg, dear Saviour, that you will make me partaker of those Sacred dispositions which your Divine Soul had at the last moment of your life, to the which, I with my whole heart unite mine; that they

they may supply for all my defects at my death. Dear Jesus be to me a Jesus, especially at the hour of my death. I abandon myself entirely to you, to suffer for your sake the pangs of death. And I renounce and disavow all impatience, or any evil I may be tempted to commit.

At the Benediction say,

O most Blessed and undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I adore you, and consecrate to you my Heart and all its affections. Bless me now and at the hour of my death, as you bless those that are yours; and bring me with them to that everlasting glory which you have designed for me; that I may for ever bless and praise your mercies. Amen.

A Manner of assisting at HOLY MASS, and preparing ourselves for Death, by considering our Death as a Sacrifice of Propitiation for our Sins, and Impetration of eternal Happiness.

M O T I V E S.

THE prayer Christ made for us, tho' of such force, and the sacrifices of himself offered for us, though of an infinite value, will avail us nothing, if they are not applied to us. Now they are only applied to us by our prayers and sacrifices offered to him. The best sacrifice we can offer, is certainly our lives, which we may offer as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, because that all things, and all the satisfactions which we might severally offer in sacrifice to God, are all victims of this sacrifice: Therefore, if we sincerely, with an humble and contrite heart offer our lives, that offering will effect the full pardon of our sins, and by an entire atonement blot them out. God is pleased to give us an example of this in the third book of Kings, in the person of the Prophet sent to Jeroboam, who, for punishment of his sin, was killed by a lion; but

but because he accepted the punishment with submission, and willingly offered his life to atone for his sin, death thus accepted of by him made him again a just man, and acceptable to God.

We cannot have a true contrition, unless we are willing to destroy our past sins by such a sacrifice as offers in satisfaction for them, whatever proved an unjust satisfaction to us, and was cause of our offending God. By death we do this; therefore, who really, willingly, and actually receive and offer their death as such, have certainly the true contrition that blots out all sins.

At the Beginning of Mass.

Consideration.

Reflect, how Adam having sinned, God, in punishment of it, ordained that he and all his posterity should die. This is due to us on account of that sin; but how much more have we deserved that punishment on account of our own sins?

Affections.

Since death, my God, is the punishment you ordain for sin, it is with an
humble

humble and submissive heart to the decree of your justice that I accept of it ; and in the spirit of penance I accept of all the pains, humiliations, and privations which accompany it, in satisfaction for all the sins I have committed, which I am truly sorry for : O pardon me, my God, I beseech you !

How great is my ingratitude to your Divine Majesty, who drew me out of nothing, and gave me all I have ; and I have disowned your sovereignty over me, by refusing to subject myself to your law. You could at each moment have punished me, and I slighted your justice, and offended you with so little fear and so great liberty : I have dishonoured your sanctity by the impiety of my sins, and your goodness which adopted me for your child, by refusing to obey and honour you as my Father. You proffered me a share in your happiness, in your glory ; nay, in yourself, if I would be faithful to you, and the least difficulty has made me otherways.

Had I but once offended you, it were still too much, but I have multiplied my sins above the hairs of my head. My iniquities and offences are so many, that I

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cannot

cannot look through the numberless multitude of them.

In every place, surrounded with your gifts, have I sinned. No moment of my life which has not been stained with different sins, and this, after pardons so frequently obtained. Besides, how many have I caused to sin by my ill example?

Pardon, my God, these crimes, for I am truly sorry for them, and detest them with my whole heart. I wish I were capable of an infinite sorrow to blot out the guilt of them. Accept, Lord, in lieu of the grief that is wanting in me, that which my Saviour had in the garden of Olives and upon the Cross for the sins of the whole world, and of mine in particular. Purify me from my secret sins, and pardon those I have committed by others. Despise not, my God, a contrite heart, which only hopes for pardon from your infinite mercy, and the promise you made, that when a sinner is sorry for his sins you will no longer remember his iniquities.

If, dear Lord, I have ceased to be your dutiful child, you have not ceased to be my loving Father. All that I can offer you in satisfaction for my sins and ingratitude, is but my life, which I offer you with a very good will, as a propitiatory victim ;

victim; and with it I offer the privation of all I have loved, liked, or enjoyed when I offended you. At this very instant, if you please, deprive me of all, and of my life. I resign it to you with my whole heart, and would think myself most happy if you did it by violence of the grief you give me for having offended you: But if you defer taking the whole sacrifice, take at least what part you please, I resign it to you, and only beg you will give me the grace to be sanctified by it.

At the Offertory.

Consideration.

Reflect that Christ, your model and example, offers himself to his eternal Father to die for satisfaction of your sins, well may you offer yourself to do the same.

Affections.

O eternal Father, behold your dear Son, who, out of his abundant charity for me, offers himself to die, for to satisfy for my sins and offences, it is but just that I do the same; I offer you, then, my liberty and my life, my heart and my soul, but

united with his, that so it may be grateful in your sight. I accept of death with all submission; and I offer it to your Divine Majesty for expiation of my sins; and that as a criminal, guilty of treason, whom you have justly condemned to die. I am glad that my body will be reduced to earth, to punish my proud mind, and all the faults I have committed for its sake; but grant that my soul may return to your hands from whence it came.

I resign myself to all the bitterness, pains, and anguishes; to all temptations, (sin excepted) is all the satisfaction I can make your Divine Majesty; having nothing more of my own to offer, I beg you will please to accept of this *all* that I can give; and remember not my sins and iniquities, but remember that I am the work of your hands, the price of your blood, the conquest of your Cross, the pledge of your death, and the effect of your love. It is to your death that I unite mine; it is to your love that I join mine, with this protestation, that I will admit of no other sentiments but those conformable to what faith teaches; and that I will be moved with no other thoughts than those of hope in your mercies and love of your goodness;
if

if any thing pass in me contrary to these, I disown, extract, and detest them.

I recommend my soul into your hands, it is what you have bought with the price of your blood. Be mindful, dear Lord, of all you have done for it, and forget all it has done against you. You were pleased to declare, *that you will not the death of a sinner, to wit, eternal death; but that he be converted and live for ever.* It is what I beg for the sake of your most precious passion and death; and since you have said it, I hope that the sentence which will decide my eternity, will be such as to procure my eternal happiness.

It is true, my God, that notwithstanding all this, I am very full of fears, my sins being so great and your judgments so terrible; but yet my hopes are still greater, because your mercy is great, and you forgive all that confide in you. I cast myself into the Abyss of your mercies, full of repentance for having so often offended you, and had I but this moment left, I would employ it in loving you. The greater my sins are, the more glorious it is for you to pardon me, on which account I beg it.

From the Preface till the Elevation.

Reflect that the victim must necessarily die before we can enter our happy inheritance. A good christian cannot enjoy that supreme Good who has not first ardently desired it: For not to desire it is a contempt of it; and that is such a fault that will not be repaired but by an ardent desire of the said happiness. It is contempt not to desire eternal blifs far more than the preserving human life, so as not to be content to sacrifice our temporal life to obtain eternal. We ought also to desire to make the exchange soon; for what we really desire we are eager to possess.

Affections.

My God, I firmly believe each point of faith. I am ready to sign any of them with my blood; in particular, all you have revealed of that blifsful eternity; *where your servants enter into your joy; become like to you, because they see you as you are; dwell in you as you dwell in them, and possess that kingdom prepared for them before the creation of the world.* I ardently desire to be dissolved here by death, that

I may be with you, my God. And having nothing but my life to purchase it, with all I might have enjoyed by it, I here offer you the sacrifice of both, accept it, dear Lord, and let a speedy death complete the Holocaust. *Hasten that day, when joyful tidings will be brought me that I must go into the house of our Lord, where God dwells, and I shall possess the freedom and liberty of his children. Send my deliverer a happy death; I expect it, and will embrace it with open arms, hoping by its means to get into yours. I fear it not, under the covert of your mercies, insured to me by the blood of your Divine Son, which he shed for me, and is this very moment going to offer the same for me on this Altar.*

At the Elevation.

Consideration.

With all imaginable respect adore Jesus Christ elevated on high. Reflect that it is through the sacred merits of his death, that you can only hope, and lay claim to eternal life. Look on him in that state in which he negotiates your salvation. Beg him to form your death by the model
of

of his; for you cannot die well unless he makes you partaker of his interior dispositions.

Affections.

Eternal Father, behold here your dear Son, who is pleased to offer himself and his merits for me; it is by them that I have a just title to an eternal possession of your Divine Majesty, and of all in you. Your Son, Christ Jesus, has laid down the full price of it for me. I have no other title to it, nor do I desire any other. His death for me, is my security for eternal life; and with full confidence I challenge it in his name and by his merits, which he has bequeathed to me as an inheritance. It is what I ardently desire, and will firmly hope for, because your unerring word assures me of it; for they that hope in you shall not be confounded.

My dear Saviour, who not only would die for me, but also suffer a most cruel agony, I adore each of your interior motions, even to the last moment of your life. I adore your last thoughts, words, and sufferings. I adore the last sentiments of your sacred humanity, and the last application of the powers of your soul. I
offer

offer you my death, and the last moment of my life, in honour of your most holy death, and last moment of your sacred life.

Dear Jesus, bless my death and sanctify it by yours. Unite it, Lord, with yours. Make me partaker of those divine dispositions with which you rendered your soul into the hands of your eternal Father. Grant that the last sigh of breath I take, may be consecrated to you, and be a perfect act of love.

As you accepted of death from the first moment of your incarnation, and remained in the same acceptance all the days of your life; in like manner I, from this moment, accept of whatever death you have ordained for me, and will, with your grace, remain in a constant resolution of dying for you according to your will, in the spirit of obedience; heartily desiring that the last use of my liberty may be an act of obedience to your divine will in honour of that last act you produced on the Cross, when, bowing down your sacred head in obedience to the divine decree, you rendered up your blessed soul. I also accept of death in the spirit of love. As your death was the most pregnant testimony of your love for my soul, so I desire to give my life (which, according

according to nature, is most dear to me) as the greatest proof I can give that I truly love you, and have a sincere desire to be where I shall ever love you, and never more offend you.

At the Agnus Dei.

Consideration.

Behold Christ in the Blessed Sacrament as your strength, your hope, your support, as the pledge of your salvation, and of a happy eternity.

Affections.

Come, sweet Saviour, come and take possession of my heart, it is yours by so many titles; sustain, comfort, and assure it against all the terrors of death and apprehensions of my salvation. Say to my soul, especially at the hour of my death, as you did to your Apostles, *It is I, fear not, peace be with you*, no attempt of the enemy shall hurt you. Say but these comfortable words, and my soul shall be saved.

Who am I, great God, that you should vouchsafe to visit me? You truly verify what you once said, that you come to save those

those in danger to be lost. I have reason to fear, when I think what I have deserved for offending you ; but yet much more to hope, when I reflect what you have done to merit my salvation. I acknowledge you for my God and my Saviour, and as such I confide in you. It is in your merits that I place all my hopes of salvation, fortify me in my passage out of this world to eternity.

Since you have been pleased to visit me, I beg you will leave me some tokens of your presence, giving me victory over all my enemies, sins, and passions ; especially that from which I may fear the worst consequences at my death. Do not refuse me this, since it is for your glory I beg it. I am sensible that my continued offences deserve that you should let me die in them, but the blood which you have shed for me, cries out to you, and demands its price and salary ; since it was shed for no other end than to cleanse me from my sins, and merit eternal bliss for me, which I confide you will grant me through its merits.

What shall I render you, my dear Saviour, for all you have done for me ? But what shall I return you for yourself which you have been pleased to give me ? I will return you my life, because that includes
all

all in my power to give. I really desire then to die, if such be your will. Please to unite my death with yours, and say to my soul before she quits her earthly habitation, as you did to Magdalene, *many sins are forgiven you*; and if you cannot say, *Because she has loved much*; say at least, *because you have loved her much*.

Eternal Father, your Son has given himself to me, that I may offer him and his merits to you to pay my debts, and purchase what I stand in need of. I then present him to you, with all the merits of his life and death; and beg by them to be discharged of the heavy load of my sins, and enriched with all I want to render my death precious in your sight; and that I may receive all the last Sacraments, with dispositions necessary to receive the grace and virtue they bring with them. With joy I receive death from your hands, because it gives me to you, and alone can bestow you upon me by a happy exchange.

Death being the greatest concern, and it being uncertain what deaths we shall die, and whether our last sickness will permit us to think of God; and though it should, whether we shall be capable of strengthening ourselves then by those interior acts of virtue requisite to prepare for

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so dangerous a passage ; let us, with God's grace, every week, for the remainder of our lives, hear one Mass according to the method here set down to prepare for death, endeavouring to perform the acts therein mentioned, as if we were presently to depart out of the world ; and beseeching Almighty God to grant that they may supply for those which probably we may not be in a capacity of making in our last sickness ; for if we can, at that time, make any, we must expect to make them with difficulty and less perfection.

A METHOD OF
HEARING MASS,

For the Souls in Purgatory.

BEFORE MASS,

The Offering and Intention.

MOST Adorable Trinity, it is in your name, and for your honour, that I desire to unite myself, not only with the priest who ascends to your altar, but also with the Priest of priests, JESUS our
L Mediator

Mediator with you. I desire to offer you, with him and by him, the sacrifice of his body and blood, to render your supreme greatness all the homage that is due to you; to thank you for all your benefits, natural and supernatural, which you daily bestow upon me, notwithstanding my unworthiness, and obtain of your infinite mercy the pardon of innumerable sins; as also to draw down your benedictions upon the whole Church, especially upon my parents, benefactors, friends, enemies, and above all, upon my unworthy self.

But my God, it is not only this which calls me now to assist at, and offer this great sacrifice, it is also charity to the poor souls; the sad state they are in obliges me to concern myself for their relief, and to offer this great sacrifice for them, which I do, in honour and memory of our Saviour's passion suffered for them; to beg that the merits thereof may be applied to them; to give worthy thanks for the favours granted them, of having departed this life in your grace and love, to satisfy for the punishment due to their sins, and to implore their speedy deliverance out of Purgatory.

Another motive, which excites me to assist the poor souls, is to repair the glory which

which I have so often robbed you of by my sins; and this I think I cannot better perform than by endeavouring to procure the release of some soul out of Purgatory, that going to heaven it may burn in your love, and render you the due honour and glory which my wicked life has deprived you of.

At the Beginning of the Mass.

Consider how desirous the Angel Guardians of the poor souls are, that you should succour their pupils; and how attentive they are, to see with what fervour and devotion you treat with Almighty God concerning their deliverance.

At the Confiteor.

Bowing down with the Priest, cast the eyes of your soul to the bottom of Purgatory, and there discover how the tormented souls, with joined hands, beg the assistance of your prayers. Join your voice with theirs, and cry for mercy in their behalf, by the repeated petitions to the Sacred Trinity, of *Kyrie Eleyson, Christe Eleyson*. Think how highly it grieves those faithful

departed, that ever they offended God.
Make an act of Contrition for them.

At the Epistle.

Reflect, how faith teaches us, that all the faithful, who die in the grace of God, are not always so pure, but that there remains some debt to God's justice which must be satisfied, either in this world or the next. Now how few are there who have had either the courage or the time to expiate, by a severe penance, the many mortal and venial sins which they have committed? They are then obliged, by God's justice, to expiate them in Purgatory, from which they will not be released till they have entirely satisfied for them.

My God! who those souls are, your secret and impenetrable judgment permits me not to know; but I may and ought to believe that there are many in that rigorous prison, whom the most indispensable duties of nature and religion allows me not to abandon without relief. Many, perhaps, may be my ancestors, my relations, friends, well-wishers, and benefactors, who, in this world, were zealous for
my

my good. Others also, who through the ill example I gave them of a soft and unmortified life, or by my too great compliance with them, or theirs with me, have contracted faults for which they have been long, and are still detained in those devouring flames.

O my God ! though I should have no particular obligation to those friends of yours, so cruelly tormented, and so worthy of compassion, burning in fire and flames, ten thousand times hotter than any in this world ; though I should no ways have contributed to their sufferings, and the retardment of their happiness, yet they being your children and elect, and your glory requiring it, I most heartily beg their deliverance, that they may ascend to heaven, and there see, bless, and praise you ; where their love for your Divine Majesty will be more pure and ardent than 'tis possible for any upon earth to have. Dear Lord ! put a speedy end to their pains, that they may be translated to the State of Glory, which you eternally designed them ; and give me the advantage of procuring them that happiness, that I may gain those blessed souls for my powerful intercessors to your Divine Majesty.

At the Offertory.

Reflect, that for certain, the most efficacious succour we can procure for the Souls in Purgatory, is to offer, for their deliverance, the immaculate Lamb of God, whose infinite virtue is most efficacious for the living and the dead.

My God ! what victim can I offer you, proper to appease your Justice, but your only Son ? It is him I offer with my whole heart, and with an entire confidence, though sensible of my own unworthiness. I beg and conjure you to cast your eyes upon this adorable Holocaust, your only Son, who is going to be offered to you in the odour of sweetness ! It is not only a lively representation of the bloody Sacrifice, which disarm'd your anger, and made you recall the sentence of condemnation you had pronounced against us, but it is in substance and virtue the same Sacrifice.

Divine Jesus ! Host of propitiation for the living and the dead : I adore you, and return you millions of thanks, for having confided to us this offering of your Divine Body and precious Blood, for the solace of the Souls in Purgatory. I acknowledge the equity of your judgments,

ments, I admire the excess of your Charity! and as you are Redeemer, I implore your merits for the release of those you punish as judge; especially N. N. for whom I offer this Mass.

Give, dear Lord, a fresh proof of your infinite bounty to those suffering souls, by drawing them from the devouring flames; and give me the grace to prevent your justice, by a Purgatory of love and grief, which may exempt me from ever undergoing that of your rigour. *Amen.*

When you hear Mass for your Parents, say,

My God, you have commanded me to honour my Father and Mother, and by a singular mercy you allow me the means of testifying my love and gratitude to them after their death, by offering the Sacrifice of Holy Mass for them. I with all my heart beg their solace and deliverance, and desire the same for all the faithful, whom your justice retains in Purgatory. I wish to love you, and to detest all sin for them. Grant I may, with them and with your Saints, see and enjoy you for all eternity. *Amen.*

At

At the Sanctus.

Consider those poor souls surrounded with flames of fire, like so many prisoners loaden with chains. See how they endeavour to get free, and fly to heaven to the living God. Beg their solace and deliverance heartily of him ; saying,

Merciful Creator, let one drop of that precious Blood which fell from the wounds of your dear Son and my Saviour, be applied to the suffering souls in Purgatory ; since it was shed for them, so let it solace, comfort, and release them.

And grant me the grace to blot out my offences in this life by contrition and penance, to avoid the rigour of your justice in the next ; and to purify my soul for the heavenly bliss, where none can enter with the least spot or stain.

At the Elevation.

Behold Christ, when lifted up, as on the tree of the Cross ; and reflect that in the midst of his torments, turning to the good thief, he said, *This day you shall be with me in Paradise.* Beg him to say the same to the poor souls, now he is in his kingdom, and confide that through
the

the merits of this Sacrifice he will do so.

O Eternal God ! behold here on this Altar, as on the Cross, your only Son the worthy object of your complacence, who only merits to be heard. He sacrifices to you, not another's flesh but his own body and blood ; that body which was torn with stripes, and all covered with wounds, to repair and satisfy for all offences committed against you. That blood, which was shed to blot out the sins of the world, is here offered ; he immolates himself with the same love and charity now as he did on the Cross. Let one drop of his most precious blood be applied to the poor souls, it being more than sufficient to quench their flames, and free them from the pains of Purgatory.

Can you, my God, refuse to hear the voice of your dear Son, infinitely sweet, and equally powerful and strong, which demands of you mercy ? It is not, my God, to your justice that we address ourselves, I know that those souls for which we presume to plead for deserves all the pains they suffer for their having offended you, and for their having had too little zeal for your glory, and not sufficiently revenging and punishing the offences and injuries

injuries they had done you, having too much spared themselves upon earth, they justly suffer more rigorous pains than penance would have required of them.

But remember, O great God ! infinitely merciful, that Jesus Christ, their charitable Mediator, did not spare himself for their salvation ; all his blood was shed for them ; his heart was plunged in sorrow for them ; their redemption is not only abundant but superabundant ; let them find in those treasures of his immense satisfactions wherewithal to discharge all their debts.

I beg and conjure you, dear Jesus, whom I believe as really present on this Altar as you are in Heaven, to speak in favour of those souls who, though designed for your kingdom, yet will be long excluded from it, if you do not intercede for them,

At the Pater Noster.

Say it with the Priest as a most efficacious prayer to obtain relief for the poor souls, and believe that every word you pronounce with fervour, is a great solace to them.

At

At the Agnus Dei.

Reflect that on the Altar is the same Lord, who heretofore assured his Apostles, that all they should ask his Father in his name, he would grant them. Believe it, because he said it, and say,

O Eternal Father! behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world; I humbly beseech you, for his precious Blood and sufferings, that you will be merciful to the poor souls for whom I hear this Mass, and grant them their deliverance, or an abatement of their pains.

Dear Jesus! those souls burn more by the ardour of their charity, and the desire of seeing you, than by the activity of the flames which purify them. They suffer a most violent thirst, and there is none but you, O amiable and merciful Jesus! that can open to them the source of living Water, which they so ardently sigh after. You only can put an end to their banishment, of which each day seems an age; be then, dear Saviour, their powerful Mediator.

Pie Jesu Domine dona eis Requiem. Amen.

At the Communion.

Dear Saviour, although I am most unworthy, yet I desire to receive you, and that to obey your will, to glorify your name, and to be united to you, and render the merits of your passion efficacious both for my own soul, and the souls for whom I offer this Mass. Grant, dear Lord, that the effect of this communion may be eternal life to my soul and theirs.

Great is my hope and confidence, since I hope for no less than yourself, my God, with everlasting life and glory; and that the poor souls, through your mercy, may be speedily translated to the fruition of your beatifying presence, there to love, bless, and praise you for eternity.

At the Last Blessing.

Receive the Priest's blessing, and beg the blessed Trinity to bless the suffering souls created to his image and designed for his glory: Say,

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless all the poor souls, and bring them to eternal bliss. Amen.

Of

Of the Profit we ought to draw from Holy Mass, and the Return we ought to make to God for it.

We owe more to God, and to his Divine Son Jesus Christ, for the benefit of Holy Mass, than it is possible for us ever to repay. Whatever we can do, we still shall remain infinitely indebted for it, not only during life, but for a whole eternity.

Though we can never return what we owe, yet we must, at least, return what we can, to acknowledge the benefit of Holy Mass, and to imitate our dear Saviour, who therein daily offers himself a sacrifice for us. We must offer all our actions to God as so many Sacrifices and testimonies of our engagement to his service, and submissions to his will. Holy Scripture gives the name of Sacrifice to almost all good actions; and St. Augustin says expressly, that each good action is a true Sacrifice.

Now as we are composed of body and soul, there are two sorts of Sacrifices which we ought to offer; the first consists in referring to God all exterior and sensible actions; and the second, in consecrating to him all the motions of our heart and acts of our will.

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This is the double Sacrifice which St. Paul exhorts us to make, and which, to be acceptable to God, must be animated with charity; that is, God's love. Reason, as he says, engages us to render that duty to God, for we have received all from him, and consequently owe all to him. It would be an act contrary to the rules of Justice and Reason, to employ for any other use but God's service, what we possess purely from his liberality.

St. Paul makes the interior Sacrifice chiefly consist in two things: The first is to strip ourselves of the sentiments and inclinations of the Old Man; and the second, to assume the sentiments and inclinations of the New One, Christ Jesus.

God does not exact the same exterior actions from all; for each one must act according to the state his Divine Majesty has placed him in; nor does he exact the same interior degree of perfection. Nevertheless he will have our whole life be a perpetual Sacrifice to him; which it will be, if we consider our employment as a commission from God, and accordingly acquit ourselves of it; being exact in all its parts and duties. Whoever proceeds so, is a true victim, which continually sacrifices itself to the will and pleasure

sure of God ; so that their whole life is a perpetual Sacrifice.

Each time we assist at Mass, we contract, as it were, a new obligation of living so, and of devoting ourselves entirely to God's service, and of conforming ourselves to his will in all our actions ; which is the fruit we should draw from Holy Mass, and the best return we can make for so incomparable a benefit.

To render this practice more easy, we may distinguish the four perpetual Sacrifices :

The first is a Holocaust.

The second, a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving.

The third of Impetration. And

The fourth of Propitiation.

Now the life of a good Christian ought to be a continual exercise of all those acts of virtue.

As to the first which is a Holocaust, in which the victim used to be entirely consumed by fire, God having given us our liberty, which is the precious thing we have to offer ; it is that victim we consume by fire when for the love of him, and the desire we have to content him, we give him the entire dominion we have over ourselves, actions, and goods ; not reserving to ourselves the choice of any of

our actions, nor of the circumstances that accompany them. It is not enough to present to God our labours, prayers, and fasts, or any other exercise, however good and holy, if they are not according to his will, and done both in the time and place he would have them, for otherways they will be of little or no merit in his sight; for if we reserve to ourselves the liberty of doing what actions we please, and when and how we please, God may reproach us as he did the Jews, who fasted by humour and inclination, that their fast was of no merit, because their own will was too much in it.

We should do well to question ourselves from time to time: saying, Am I in the place God would have me be in? Do I do what God would have me do? Be assured that the most excellent of all victims, is a perfect conformity of our judgment and will to the will of God. Great is the advantage religious persons have; for in exactly observing their vows, their rules, and the orders of their superiors, both by day and night, they thereby become perfect Holocausts, immolated each moment of their lives to the will and pleasure of God. They may say with Jesus Christ, that they are always employed in doing what is pleasing

pleasing to God. And he will say of them, as of the Royal Prophet, *I have found a man according to my heart, who accomplishes all my wills.*

The second Sacrifice is of Thanksgiving. We should continually offer this Sacrifice to the Divine Majesty, since there is no moment of our lives in which we receive not some benefit from him.

In order to this we must reflect on those graces and favours, for which we are indebted to God's goodness; and acknowledge him the author of all the good we have, which he has given us for his service, offering him all we possess; and letting no occasion pass without contributing as much as is in our power, to the advancement of his glory, and the accomplishment of his designs.

We must even thank him for all the good actions we do, he having the greatest share in them: and for his being pleased to make use of us for the advancement of his glory, and for having helped us to merit heaven: for as St. Augustin observes, God crowns his own benefits when he rewards our merits.

The third Sacrifice is of Impetration. To offer this Sacrifice perpetually, we must persuade ourselves (as it is true) that of

ourselves we neither can do, nor succeed in any thing, without God's assistance. Which being, we must not fail to implore it each moment. If therefore we desire to offer his Divine Majesty this Sacrifice, we must have continually before our eyes our own miseries and weaknesses, the many evils which oppress us, and the dangers we are exposed to; the goods we stand in need of, and our inability as to the procuring the one, or freeing ourselves from the other, which will force us continually to have recourse to God.

This we may perform in several manners, sometimes by pronouncing certain words, as *Deus in adjutorium*, &c. sometimes by forming in ourselves a desire of God's assistance; fixing the eyes of our soul upon him, from whom only we expect necessary forces, and strength to act. These short prayers and interior desires are victims, which breathe forth a more odouriferous smell, than the perfumes which were formerly offered.

The revolt of our passions, the multitude of our temptations, the pain we find in labour, are as many admonitors to put us hourly in mind of exposing them to God; thereby to engage him to come to succour

succour us, and make us feel the effects of his mercies.

The fourth Sacrifice is that of Expiation, or Propitiation, which we ought also to offer perpetually. There is no Sacrifice which we should more frequently offer than this, we having in the bottom of our souls a source of sin, which even the just feel, and often every day they deplore the effects of it, and are obliged to have recourse to this Sacrifice to expiate them.

There are two things in sin, the guilt which is the offence of God, and the pain which is the chastisement it deserves. The Sacrifice of expiation includes both grief for and punishment of the fault. You will perpetually offer this Sacrifice, if as soon as you perceive yourself fallen into any sin, however small it be, you interiorly detest it, and mortify yourself in something; or at least in your examinations night and morning, if you not only grieve for the sins you have committed, but also impose some penance on yourself in satisfaction.

How holy would our life be, if, from morning to night, we employed ourselves in offering some of these Sacrifices. Sometimes making acts of conformity to the will of God, at other times thanking him for his benefits, then imploring his help,
and

and, in short, blotting out our sins and offences by acts of penance interior or exterior; thus every moment offering some Sacrifice to God.

If at first this practice should be painful and hard, *use*, with the assistance of God's grace, will render it sweet and easy: And the hopes that by it you may augment the number of the victims of love which eternally in heaven will immolate themselves to the will and pleasure of God, will incline you still more to so advantageous a practice.

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MOTIVES

To excite us to the frequent

MEDITATION

Of our SAVIOUR's Passion.

A SOUL, redeemed with the Blood of Jesus Christ, should never pass a day without remembering and thanking his Divine Majesty for the incomparable benefit of our redemption, at least the day of the week, on which it was effected, should be consecrated to the remembrance of it. This great day was Friday, a day of all days the most afflicting to our dear Saviour, and the most beneficial to us; since then was offered in sacrifice the Life and Blood of God, to obtain the life and salvation of man. It was, and with reason, the dolefullest day that ever the world beheld, or the sun gave light unto; and should be to us a day dedicated to Love and Gratitude, for
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what our dear Saviour then did and suffered for us ; yet few there are who so much as entertain a serious thought of that immense Love of God, or who return one spark of love for so great a flame.

To move us, at least, to so holy and grateful a practice, let us consider the dignity of it, which appears by our Lord's recommending it to *St. Francis*, who begged of Almighty God to discover to him what exercise of Piety would be most pleasing to him ; and being inspired to take the Holy Scripture into his hands, and having several times opened and shut it, he always met with the History of our Saviour's Passion, which convinced him, that the meditation of Christ's suffering was more acceptable to God than any other exercise of Piety.

And, moreover, our Saviour exalts this exercise to the highest degree, since he so much esteems the Memory of his Passion, that, to the end it might be daily renewed, he instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

A Second Motive to this Exercise, is the utility and advantage of it. For *St. Bonaventure* says that he, who devoutly employs himself in the Meditation of our Saviour's Life and Passion, will abundantly find

find all things necessary and useful for him ; so that he need seek no further. 'Tis a strong defence against temptations ; for if the Devil trembles at the painted image of the Cross of Christ, how much more will he be terrified to see it engraven in our souls by the continual Meditation of our Saviour's Passion ? 'Tis also a double wall against sin, for it raises fear, and creates love, both powerful motives to keep us from sin ; *Fear*, by seeing it punished and expiated with so great torments in the person of the Son of God, and *Love* for him, who has loved us to so great an excess, as to give his life for us ; how can we reflect on this and offend him any more !

The practice of this Holy Exercise, will be of great comfort and advantage to us at the hour of death : for to die like a Christian, we must die in the embrace of Jesus Crucified, with what confidence will that person resign his soul in the wounds of his Lord, who has lived all his life in them by frequent contemplation ? Christ will then embrace that faithful soul, who in this life was mindful of his Passion. 'Tis a means also to avoid the pains of Purgatory, for

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there is nothing that can so readily quench those flames, as the blood of Christ, and his infinite satisfactions, which are applied to us by the remembrance of his Passion. It is recounted that a soul was preserved from Purgatory, for accustoming herself, whenever she saw a Crucifix, to beg for those bitter pains our Lord suffered at his death on the Cross, that he would free her from the pains of Purgatory.

Albertus Magnus affirms, that one simple and devout memory of our Saviour's sufferings, is more advantageous, and more pleasing to God, than daily disciplines to blood, the fasting a whole year with bread and water, or the reciting the whole Psalter every day. If so, what treasures of grace will they have laid up who have practised it many years; what peace of mind in life, and security at the hour of death!

Though there are many persons who content themselves with only conceiving the greatness of our Saviour's suffering, and feeling a singular compassion for them, in meditating on the Passion; yet that is not the only affection to be used, nor the only fruit to be gathered from the

the same ; nevertheless it is the ground-work and foundation of the rest ; since the more we conceive and compassionate our Lord's sufferings, the more we shall lament and detest sin, which has cost him so dear. We shall also thereby more visibly perceive the virtues he gives us example of, and be sensible, that the greatest patience is that which endures most ; the greatest humility, that which is most depressed ; the greatest meekness, that which is the most silent amidst the greatest wrongs ; and the greatest obedience, that which submits to the hardest things ; this shews that conceiving the greatness of our Saviour's pains, is the ground-work of the affections and fruit we should draw from the Meditation of his Passion.

Saint *Thomas* says, that laying aside the pains of the next world, which are those of Hell and Purgatory, Christ suffered the greatest, for none in this world ever have, or ever will endure so great ; and this he proves by many reasons, but I shall only mention three of them.

The first is the greatness of his Charity, which was greater than can be ima-

gined or conceived ; this caused him most earnestly to desire the Glory of God, and the Salvation of men : and because the greater pains he endured for sin, the more fully he made atonement to God for them, and the more compleatly he redeemed man ; he would have his sufferings be excessive.

The second was the simple nature of his pains, which had no mixture of comfort or ease. Never any one in this life suffered such pains without some qualification or comfort, which rendered them more tolerable ; but our Saviour excluded all ways, by which he might find the least ease or comfort.

The third was the tenderness of his body ; which being the most perfect, and of the best constitution, was consequently more tender and sensible of pain than any other.

What do we owe his Divine Majesty for all he has done and suffered for us ? We certainly owe him all we are, or are capable of ; but since we have nothing of our own that is worth his acceptance, let us, at least, labour to make our lives entirely his, since he is all ours. And if we cannot every day, we may at least once

a week, on the Friday, give ourselves to the consideration of what he has suffered for us.

The following Meditations, in which is contained our Saviour's Passion, may serve for that effect, using one of them at a time.

Six-and-Twenty Meditations of the Passions for Friday, which will suffice for Half a Year, and, if repeated, will compleat the whole Year.

I. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER that the Son of God, the evening before he suffered and died, in token of his infinite love, and to perpetuate the memory of his death and passion, left his body and blood, with his whole divinity, to be received by us in the Holy Eucharist. How does the greatness of his love, and his desire of being continually remembered by us, appear in this mystery? When lovers part, they give each other some tokens to refresh the memory; so our Saviour instituted this Divine Sacrament, that in his absence it

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might

might be a remembrance of his Holy Passion and Sacred Person; therefore when he instituted it he said, *Every time you do this, do it in remembrance of me*; that is, to remember how much I loved you; how much I valued you; and how much I suffered for you.

Thus his motive, in establishing this Holy Table, was purely, that by this stupendous food, and daily unbloody sacrifice, he might continually renew the memory of his precious death.

II. MEDITATION.

THE time our Saviour chose to prepare this delightful banquet was the night before his passion, when the greatest pains and sufferings in the world were preparing for him, when men were contriving his crucifixion and death; then he thought of bestowing himself entirely upon them, with his Divinity, and all the treasures of his power, wisdom, and goodness; his love for us could not bear a long absence, and therefore he invented this admirable way of remaining with us, that to him we might fly for refuge, invoke him in our necessities, and speak to him face to face,

face, when we are in distress; that his presence might stir up our devotion, increase our reverence, strengthen our hope, and enflame our love.

What thanks do we owe to our dear Saviour for all this? all we can say, or do for love of him, comes infinitely short of our debt: let us invite the Angels to bless, praise, and magnify his Divine Majesty for us; and let us beg of his infinite goodness, through the bowels of his mercy and love, that when he shall enter our hearts, he will be pleased to unite them to himself, so that they may never more be separated from him.

III. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER that our Lord having instituted the Blessed Sacrament, and left us a most convincing demonstration of his love, he retired into the garden to pray, and prepare himself for death, taking with him three of his Disciples, to whom he spoke these mournful words, *my Soul is sorrowful unto Death*. Then going a little aside from them, he with great recollection and reverence began to pray. He separated himself from his Disciples,

Disciples, and from all that might occasion distraction, for our example ; and kneeling on the ground, he prostrated with the greatest humility of body, but much more of soul, to adore his Eternal Father, and giving way to all the pains and sufferings of his passion, that they might seize upon his soul, before they tormented his body ; he was overwhelmed with grief and sadness, proceeding from the clear foresight, and natural apprehension of his approaching Passion, which was so great, that his soul endured such an anguish and agony, as none in the world had ever suffered. This appeared by the Blood which gushed out all over his Body ; and this strange sort of sweat, never before heard of in the world, was a token of the greatness of the inward Agony of his soul. As there was never such a sweat, so there was never so great a sorrow. The natural horror our Lord had of his Passion, must have been infinitely great to have caused it ! There are good Authors of opinion, that our Lord in that sweat lost more than ninety-seven thousand Drops of Blood.

IV. MEDITATION.

IV. MEDITATION.

SEE and behold, my soul, what a condition thy Lord is in for thee! beset with so much anguish, struggling and fainting under the apprehensions of death, going and coming from the Disciples to the Eternal Father, and from the Eternal Father to the Disciples, and finding no comfort from either, he continues his prayer for three hours, begging his Father, that *if it were possible that cup might pass from him*. Here we may take notice, that he first says, *Father, to you all things are possible*. And after adds, *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*. What could make this impossible to him, to whom all things are possible? O! it was only his love for us which made it so!

O extasy of love! O stupendous effect of God's pity and compassion towards us! he, to redeem a slave, has delivered up his only Son, that we might be delivered from the jaws of Satan, and pains of Hell; though we did not ask it, yet for our sakes he refuses his most innocent Son what he petitions for himself with Sweat of Blood. And after this so great an effect of God's love, we are frightened
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from our duty to him by the least difficulty, and can take no pains for his sake, nor pray an hour, nor forgive an injury, nor resist a temptation, for love of him.

V. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER that after our Saviour's prayer was ended, there presently came a troop of armed men, and at the head of them *Judas*, who with a kiss betrayed his Divine Master. The Disciples ran away and abandoned his Sacred Person to that herd of bloody wolves, who set upon that spotless Lamb left alone in their power. Who can hear, without being moved with all the affections of love and grief, the barbarity with which they treated our dear Saviour! They bound his hands behind him with cords, and, after an inhuman manner, dragged him along the streets with a rope about his neck, some pulling him forwards, and others backwards with violence. What did our dear Lord suffer on this occasion! what pain, confusion, and disgrace! all which he willingly underwent for our sakes, offering himself a
Sacrifice

Sacrifice for our Salvation ; though, at the same time, he knew we would a thousand times betray him, who suffered such affronts for our love.

If his Disciples left and abandoned him, 'twas because of the danger they saw ; but we forsake him without the alarm of danger, and see the peril we run into, by departing from him. How much greater is our crime than theirs ! let us with a heart full of sorrow beg pardon for having ever left him, by offending him, and resolve to do so no more. Grant me, dear Lord, this favour, that I may ever remain fast bound to you, by all the duties of my state, and for Eternity, be never separated from you.

VI. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how Christ having been taken in the garden, bound hand and foot, and his whole body loaden with chains, is presented before *Annas*, where he is accused of speaking arrogantly to the High Priest ; for which he receives a box on the ear, from a hand armed with a Gauntlet, which was no less

less painful, than injurious and affronting. The wicked High Priest, and all that were about him, scoffed and laughed to see our Lord so struck. Reflect a little who it is that is thus treated, as speaking arrogantly? 'Tis no less than God himself, King of kings, and Lord of lords, the wisdom of the Eternal Father; and shall so great a Majesty receive so injurious an affront for speaking to a vile wretched man, a Rakehell, guilty of all sorts of wickedness?

Admire, that the earth does not dissolve at so great a prodigy of impiety; that a thunderbolt does not crush that impious hand, and that the angels can suffer such an injury done to God! Admire again and again the infinite love of God, who binds his own hands with the chains of his love for us, that he might not revenge the injuries done to his Son! Admire still more his goodness in suffering you, who have so often buffeted him, and have so little profited by so great an example of Patience, as not to be able to suffer the least injury, slight, or affront, for his sake.

VII. MEDITATION.

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VII. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, with all their wicked crew, being retired to take their rest, Christ is so far from being allowed to take any, that he is committed to the rabble rout of Soldiers, to serve them for sport. Here reflect, that the Eternal Wisdom of God is become the sport of wicked men; he is mocked and scoffed at the whole night, by those impious wretches, for so *St. Luke* relates, saying, *that same night the Soldiers that guarded him, scoffing at him, covered his face; and striking him said, Prophecy to us, O Christ, who it was that struck thee? and many Blasphemies they uttered against him.* We may imagine what a night our Saviour had among those savage Executioners, whose cruelty cannot be conceived; nor will it ever be known till the day of judgment, what our Saviour suffered that night. If a stranger we never saw, or heard of before, if a thief, if a murderer, should be so unworthily and cruelly treated, we should be moved with compassion; and shall we not compassionate our dear Redeemer, who has suffered such unworthy things

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for

for us? We ought to fill all places with our sighs and groans; but, O great ingratitude! so far we are from this, that we easily forget so great a prodigy of suffering love!

Consider moreover how, whilst this was acting, *St. Peter* denied our Lord. What a wound was this to the heart of Jesus! How deeply did it afflict him! Far more than all he suffered besides. Yet how often do we deny our Divine Master? As often as we voluntarily offend him. If after looking on our Crucified Saviour, it happens to us as it did to *St. Peter*, that our Lord looks on us by his interior grace, let us, with *St. Peter*, weep bitterly; for how can we behold him in that sad condition without tears?

VIII. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how, that dismal night being past and morning now come, they hurry our Lord, bound with ropes, to *Pilate*, and then to *Herod*, and then to *Pilate* again; all which way his Divine Majesty went with exceeding weariness of body, by reason of the torments

torments of the past night, and want of sleep. Both before *Pilate* and *Herod*, he was continually accused by the Jews, but none of their accusations were found true. Then there rose up other witnesses against him, more powerful than the former, and they procured his death; but who could they be? Alas! none but ourselves, who continually accuse him by sinning: for, he being our bail, we make him guilty of death, by those crimes which make us so; thus he, though truly innocent as to any crime of his own, makes himself guilty by taking ours upon him; and therefore he held his peace and was silent, because he could not refute this accusation; which silence made him pass for a fool or madman in Herod's court; and did we not know him to be the wisdom of the Eternal Father, his judgment might be called in question, for undergoing what we see him suffer for ungrateful man.

Whilst you consider him in this condition, imagine you hear him say to you: Dost thou consider what I have done for thee? Thou callest me the Word of God, and the Eternal Wisdom, and I am so;

if then I have chosen to be contemned and despised in this world for thee, oughtest not thou to do the same for me? See what your practice has hitherto been, if conformable to his example or no, and what you resolve it shall be for the future.

IX. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how *Pilate*, to content our Lord's accusers, commanded he should be scourged, thinking by this means to appease the rage of his enemies. With what horror was not our dear Lord struck, when he heard the sentence of his flagellation? May we not think he sweat Blood again with the terror of it? Yet he submitted to it. No sooner was this cruel order given, but the executioners laid hold of him. What spectacle of horror could exceed this! His hands tied behind his back, he is violently hurried away by two or three hangmen, the rods and whips are prepared, they strip him naked and tie him to a pillar, and then begin, with a hellish rage, to discharge their lashes and stripes upon his delicate body, and tear his

his most pure flesh, adding scourges to scourges, and wounds to wounds, so that he received more than five thousand strokes; which flagellation was beyond example bloody and cruel. We could not have the heart to beat a dog after that manner, how then can we be so hard-hearted as to consider our Saviour so barbarously treated, and not shed one tear?

X. MEDITATION.

LET us more attentively consider this cruel Spectacle, and view our dear Saviour's body all in a gore blood, and his flesh torn from his bones. What a sight is it to see the Lord of the creation tied to a pillar and whipped like a malefactor! What can this mean, my God! What punishment is this? What crimes have you committed, my Lord, to be thus scourged? Ha! it is plain that my sins are the cause; for having taken upon him my debts, he is liable to the payment due for them.

Draw near to his Divine Majesty, and imagine that whilst he suffers this for you, he says to you: *Will there never, do you*

think, be wounds enough? It is in your power to prevent any more. With eyes full of tears, and a heart full of compassion, bewail your impieties, weep over your ingratitude, and wash the wounds of your dear Saviour with tears of compunction, for he expects it from you. Then consider what return you have made him; and if none, deplore your ingratitude, and think what you will do hereafter. Shall a light fear (as it has done) hinder you from fulfilling his will, when so great a horror did not hinder him from procuring your salvation?

XI. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER that our Saviour's flagellation was no sooner ended but another, not less painful torture, was practised on him; to wit, the crowning him with thorns. The Evangelist says, that after they had tormented our Lord with stripes, the soldiers came to scoff and jeer at our Saviour's sufferings, and plating a crown of thorns, they pressed it on his sacred head; many of the thorns broke (as *St. Bernard* says) in entering his head, and many pierced his scull, and touched his

his brain. And they put on his shoulders a soldier's coat, instead of the purple robe then used by kings; and having given him a reed for a scepter, by way of mockery and derision, they bowed their knees and saluted him, as a mock king, a king of beggars and fools; then they buffeted him and spit in his face, and taking the reed out of his hand, they struck him with it on his head, saying, *Hail King of the Jews.*

It is hard to decide whether the pain our Saviour suffered on this occasion, or the affront put on him were the greater; but both shew the greatness of his love, which not satisfied with his dying of any sort of death, would chuse the most bitter and ignominious one that could be imagined: For, if we observe, we shall find that each torment our Saviour suffered was always accompanied with some great humiliation, to signify to us, that sufferings and humiliations are the two individual pieces of our Saviour's Cross which are never to be separated, for the one without the other makes no Cross; and we are always endeavouring to separate them; we are willing to suffer, if no humiliation attends it; but if humiliations are added to what we suffer, we cannot bear it. Let
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us remember that sufferings without humiliation, is not Christ's Cross, but only a part of it; but both together make it entire, and humiliation is the chief piece of it.

XII. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how *Pilate*, desirous to release our Saviour, whom he judged innocent, being sensible it was only the envy of his enemies which made them seek his death, for that effect exposed our Lord in the lamentable condition the soldiers had reduced him to, thinking that the very sight of him would be enough to quell their fury.

Let us endeavour to be present in spirit at that doleful spectacle, and attentively observe our dear Redeemer: See with what shame and confusion he stands before that multitude; his hands bound; a garment of scorn on his shoulders; a crown of sharp thorns upon his head, and a reed in his hand; his body all torn and running with gore blood; his face swelled with buffets; deformed with spittle and covered with blood, which ran from his sacred pierced head; for having his hands bound,
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he could not wipe off the blood which trickled down his face; his eyes were blood-shot and almost blind; in fine, such was his aspect, that he scarce looked like a Man, notwithstanding this dismal fight did not move his enemies to compassion.

XIII. MEDITATION.

BEHOLD, my soul, your God! See to what a condition his love for you has brought him that he might satisfy, in his own person, for your sins, and suffer the punishment due for them. If you ask him who it was that crowned him with that dolorous diadem? He will answer you, Behold the Man, yourself, your pride and desire of appearing. If, who put that ragged garment on his shoulders? Behold the Man, yourself, by your luxury and love of fine apparel. If, who put the reed into his hand? Behold the Man, yourself, by your unsteadiness in good, and inconstancy in your resolutions to serve him. If, who tore and rent his Sacred Body? Behold the Man, yourself, by your detracting tongue, and lessening the reputation and good name of others.

O my God ! Must those sins which I have committed so easily and lightly cost you so much ? Was so great a penalty due to me for them ? Yes, my soul, while we were sporting in the streets of Babylon, sentence of death was pronounced against us in the Royal Chamber ; whereupon the only begotten Son of God, casting away his diadem, with ashes sprinkled on his head, barefoot, and weeping, went to the place of execution, and offered himself to die instead of his Servant. What an excess of goodness ! And shall we, after this, still mock and scoff at his tears ? Shall we, with the perfidious Jews, give sentence against him by our sins ? Crying, with them, *Take him away and crucify him !*

Be confounded ! and falling at his feet, beg pardon for having ever done it, and resolve, with his Grace, never to do so any more ; but to make *him* for the future the only object of your Love, and your only recourse in distress. When in affliction, say to yourself, Behold the Man, who is the only one that can comfort me. When attacked with fear, say, Behold the Man, in whom I trust and confide, and will ever do so. In sufferings
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and pains think on his, and unite yours with them; and so likewise in all difficulties have recourse to that God-man, and keep close to him for time and for eternity.

XIV. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how our Lord was exposed to the view of the people in that deplorable condition, together with *Barrabbas*, that they might chuse one of them to be freed from death. What an affront and contempt of our Saviour, to compare him with a wicked thief, and much greater was it to prefer the thief before him! Admire the impiety of the Jews, and still more your own. The Jews knew him not for what he was, or they would never have done as they did; but we who know and profess him to be God, do, notwithstanding, daily prefer our wicked desires and affections before him. But, above all, let us admire the inscrutable abyss of God's love, which preferred our salvation to the welfare of his only Son, who is of such infinite value that Eternity contains nothing so precious! and since he would be so humbled for us, let
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us promise him that, from henceforward, we will love and prefer him before all things, and will be content, for his sake, to be postponed to those that are inferior to us.

XV. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how the Jews having chosen *Barrabbas*, and desired Christ should be crucified, the judge condemned him in these words : *I Pontius Pilate condemn thee Jesus to be hanged upon a Cross.* Our Saviour hearing the sentence given by the wicked judge, immediately put himself on his knees (as *St. Bonaventure* relates) and received it kneeling, to shew his obedience and submission to the will of his Father. Behold here, on the one side, the judge sitting on a tribunal, a place raised above the rest, and on the other side the Lord of Majesty upon his knees ! How comes Majesty to be reduced so low ? Ah, it is because the servant had committed high treason against his God, and was to have been punished with eternal death, unless his Lord would satisfy, in his own person, for his offences ! Can we, after this, doubt of God's love
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for us, and desire of our salvation? Let us banish such ungrateful thoughts, and putting our trust and confidence in him, beg, as well as confide, that since he would undergo the sentence of death for our salvation, he will not condemn us to eternal death, which we justly deserve for our offences.

XVI. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how, as soon as the sentence was given, they immediately brought forth the Cross, which was very weighty, and laid it on his shoulders all torn with stripes. This was a cruelty never practised towards any, to load an unhappy man with the gibbet on which he was to be executed; yet this they do to our dear Saviour, who receives and embraces it, as the altar on which he is to be sacrificed for the glory of his Eternal Father and our salvation; and though he knew that his strength was so spent with what he had suffered, and the loss of so much blood, that he should sink under the weight of it; yet he does not refuse it, to give us example not to refuse, under any
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pretence, to carry the Cross God requires we should carry.

Let us, my soul, follow our dear Saviour in this painful procession, and remember that he once said, *If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.* It is what we cannot, in gratitude, refuse to do for his sake, while we behold him falling under the weight of the Cross he carries for us; and at the same time know, that the burden and weight of our sins is much heavier to him than his Cross. With what pains and difficulty, being come to the foot of Mount Calvary, does he ascend it! How was his sacred feet cut with the sharpness of that craggy rock? How many horrible shakes did the Cross give to his crown of thorns, renewing all the wounds of his sacred head.

XVII. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how, being come to the top of the hill, they took off his Cross but not his Crown. Then stripping him naked for the third time, they renewed all his former wounds, and made the blood gush out afresh. What a sad spectacle

spectacle was it to see all our Saviour's body torn from head to foot, and in a gore blood ! in the meanwhile the other executioners were employed in preparing nails, cords, &c. and boring holes in the Cross, and digging a pit to plant it in. All things being ready for his crucifixion, it is probable some of his executioners, less barbarous than the rest, might say to him, Come, poor man, it is time to put an end to thy miserable life, lay thee down upon this bed prepared for thee. Others, more cruel, take hold of him and fling him down upon the Cross. What heart can behold this and not burst with grief ? What, may we imagine, might be the thoughts and affections that possess the heart of our dear Redeemer, when he lay stretched out upon the Cross. What ought to be ours in beholding him so ?

XVIII. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how, though Christ had already given such great and unquestionable proofs of his love for us ; yet, lest we should doubt of it, he would confirm it by this prodigy of love, writing us all in his hands. See with what pen

and ink the names of all mankind are written there. The nails are the pens and his blood the ink, and he is pleased to retain the characters, and to have them before his eyes, in memory of us, for all eternity.

Reflect attentively with what pain to our dear Saviour these characters were written in his Crucifixion. His Divine Majesty being stretched on the Cross as on a rack: they first take his right hand, and placing it on the hole, before made for it, in the Cross, they nail it to the same by several strokes of a hammer.

The pain, caused by this wound, made all the nerves and sinews of his body shrink up towards the hand that was nailed and drew the body after them. Our Lord's body being thus drawn to that side, the cruel executioners laying hold of the other hand to make it reach to the prepared hole, were forced to stretch it with such violence, that all the bones of our Saviour's breast were drawn from their places. Imagine what pain he suffered, and what streams of blood issued from both his hands, which were bored through with such vast great nails: But when they came to his feet, what force, what violence

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lence were they fain to use to make them descend to the holes designed for them! And being nailed with the like great nails, a river of blood ran from them.

The pains our Saviour endured in his Crucifixion were likely the greatest of all his passion. Speak, what Love and Compassion shall move you too.

XIX. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how, he being now crucified, there remains only to lift up the Cross and plant it in the pit prepared for it. O executioners, spare a little this afflicted man, this man of do-lours! and do not shake him too roughly, for the least motion will cause him a new martyrdom. But alas! They are so far from having any consideration of what he suffers, that not content with rudely dragging the Cross along, they let it fall into the pit, with such impetuosity, and so violent a jolt, that it was revealed to Saint *Mechtilda*, our Lord never suffered so sensible a pain, during the whole course of his Passion, as he did then.

Stay here, my soul, and prostrate embrace the feet of thy dying Saviour, and mingling thy tears with his precious blood, say to him, with a heart full of contrition, O adorable Saviour, how can I live when my sins have caused your death? O great God, merciful Redeemer! pardon me my offences, and have mercy on me. Grant me this favour, I conjure you, by the blood which flows from all your wounds; receive me into your favour, and give me the grace rather to die than ever voluntarily offend you more.

XX. MEDITATION.

CONTEMPLATE, my soul, thy God and Saviour in the greatest necessity, in the greatest poverty, having not a rag to cover him, nor a drop of water to quench his burning thirst; in the greatest infamy, the Cross being, in those times, the punishment only of thieves and notorious malefactors; in the greatest sorrow, for the interior grief he suffered in his soul far surpassed the pain he suffered in his body.

Thus

Thus he hangs three hours, till death, not able in the least to give any ease to his body, it being only supported by nails, and the longer it hangs, becomes still heavier, and naturally sinks downwards, so rending and tearing the nerves to the increase of his excessive pains. Yet he is God, and for thy sake reduced to such cruel straits.

What have we hitherto done or suffered for him, and what shall we resolve for the future?

XXI. MEDITATION.

CONSIDER how the time being come when his Divine Majesty would render his last breath, he bowed down his Sacred Head; his eyes, sunk with excess of pain, begin to close; his lips, from whence proceed the words of Eternal Life, become cold; and his face is covered with a mortal wanness!

At this very time, when it is usual for others to lose the use of speech, fortified by his own virtue, he raises his head, opens his eyes, and fixing them on heaven, he says, with a loud voice, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.*

Thus

Thus he ended his life, and the work of our redemption; for bowing down his head to shew his perfect submission, and opening his Sacred Mouth, he gave up the Ghost.

But, dear Saviour! look on me before you expire, and hearken to my petitions. Give me your Cross, for since it was dear to you it shall be so to me: grant me your Love, that I may continually sigh after you; and let me never want tears to bewail your sufferings and my sins: yes, my God, I desire that your Cross, your Love, and my Tears, may be the nourishment of my soul.

XXII. MEDITATION.

REFLECT that there is always great regard had to the words of a dying man; how much more ought there to be to the words of a dying God? We should always keep them in mind, and attentively study them.

The first and second words our Saviour spoke were in favour of his enemies, begging pardon for them, and promising heaven to the good thief; in which he shews

shews himself to be a God of infinite mercy and goodness.

Nothing is so hard to nature as to forgive an enemy, especially an enemy whose malice will deprive us of life; yet this our dear Saviour did, and we must all do the like; forgiving from our heart, whether asked or not asked, whatever injury has been done us, or offence given us.

The third word was to recommend us all to his blessed Mother, in the person of *St. John*, saying, *Woman, behold your Son*; and to *St. John*, *Behold your Mother*. What a legacy does our dear Saviour leave us! What a gift does he give us! His own Mother to be ours! The Sacred Virgin, in whom is contained all the perfections of the Angels and Saints. Nothing more precious could he possibly give; for when he gave us all to her, in the person of Saint *John*, he doubtless gave her the tenderness of a Mother for us all; that we may become more worthy of that honour, we must imitate Saint *John* in our Love and Respect towards her, and in making our Recourse to her as to a Mother.

XXIII. MEDITATION.

THE fourth word was, *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* This of all other sufferings was the greatest, and most sensible to our dear Saviour. He could not but complain of his being left and abandoned by his heavenly Father; and his complaint was, as if he should say, that the world should abandon me, whose practices I ever condemned, is not to be wondered at; nor that my Disciples should forsake me through fear; but that you, my Father, whose Glory I ever sought, and whose will I ever obeyed, should forsake me, is what infinitely afflicts me: What lesson for us! let us never forget it, nor our obligation to our dear Saviour, who would be forsaken by his Eternal Father, that we might not be eternally abandoned by him. O Eternal Lord God! you never punish the same crimes twice, and since you have punished my sins in the person of your dear Son, do not chastise them eternally in me, but give me the grace to bewail them during my whole Life.

The fifth word our Lord spoke was, *I Thirst*. Though our Saviour suffered a prodigious corporal thirst, yet it was not that heat

heat he complained of; its exceeding violence did not affect him so much as the thirst he had of our Salvation and Sanctification. Since then, my soul, it was this he complained of, it is in our power, with his grace, to solace him, by seriously tending to the perfection of the holy state he has called us to.

XXIV. MEDITATION.

THE sixth word was, *All is consummated.*

Our dear Saviour said it, because he saw he had nothing more to accomplish, neither of the Prophets predictions of him, his Father's orders, nor his own heart's desires. He had abandoned his Humanity to the power of love; and love could exact no more of it, yet he died in the ardor of his interior thirst; that is, in a burning desire to see all men profit by his Passion and Death; and we are more cruel than the Jews, if we do not solace him, by forsaking our sins, following his examples, and loving him with all our heart.

The seventh and last word was, *Father, into your Hands I commend my Spirit.* Join your voice with that of your most amiable Saviour, and both living and dying say

say often with him, my God and my Father, I commend my soul into your hands ; take it from the hands of my enemies, for it is an only one to me, and you know that your Divine Son, at his last gasp, recommended it to you with his own blessed soul.

XXV. MEDITATION.

The Taking of our Saviour down from the Cross.

CONSIDER how the cruel Jews, not content with having tortured our Lord whilst living, also vented their rage on him when dead, by piercing his side with a spear : This was the utmost barbarity in them ; but our dear Saviour turned it all to our advantage.

1st, Pouring out Blood and Water from that Sacred Wound, to wash and baptize the whole world.

2dly, Shedding thus the last Drop of his Blood for our Salvation ; for there yet remained some in his heart. And

3dly, To open a window to his Sacred heart, through which we might penetrate to it, and see the heart of God wounded
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for us, with this inscription in it, *God is dead for Love of you.*

Enter, my soul, into this Ark of security, by the passage which is opened to thee in his most Holy side ; let it be thy receptacle, thy constant habitation, thy Temple to pray in, and thy heaven to rest in for ever. Fly to his Sacred Wounds whenever tempted, afflicted, or troubled.

Before they bury our Lord, approach once more in Spirit, and contemplate the Author of Life, dead for thee ; see what a deplorable Condition his body is in, wounded from head to foot ; and then reflect, with *St. Bernard*, what must the wounds of our soul have been, that Christ should be thus wounded for us ! The Angels of peace weep, bitterly in beholding him, and all Creatures bewail his death as Author of their being : let us do the same, and that, if possible, with tears of Blood, since we have been the unhappy cause thereof.

XXVI. MEDITATION.

Consider with how great Compassion and Devotion the Holy Men, draw the nails, and take from the Cross our Saviour's

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viour's Sacred Body. *St. Bonaventure* says upon this subject, O amiable Passion, O delightful Death ! If I had been the wood of the Cross, and the hands and feet of my God had been nailed upon me, I would have said to those Holy Men, who took him down from the Cross, do not separate me from my Lord, but bury me with him, that I may never be separated from him. But what I cannot do with my Body, I will do with my heart ; O how good is it to be with Jesus Crucified ! I will make three dwellings in him, one in his hands, one in his feet, and a perpetual one in his precious side ; there I will rest, repose, sleep, and pray ; there I will speak to his heart, and he will grant me all I shall ask. O amiable wounds of our merciful Redeemer ! As I was entering once into them with my eyes open, the blood that gushed from them took away my sight ; and when I could see nothing but blood, I entered further, feeling about, and found myself so entangled in them, that I can get out no more ; in them I dwell, by their food I am maintained, I drink of their precious Liquor, which is so sweet, that I can neither express nor comprehend it. I fear to come out of this delightful mansion, and
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lose the comfort in which I live; but I firmly hope that, since his wounds are always open, I shall get in again, and make them my constant habitation. O blessed spear, and blessed nails, that opened to us the way of life! Were I the point of that spear, I would desire never to come out of that Divine Breast, and would say, This is my rest for ever, here I will dwell, for I have chosen this dwelling for my habitation. Thus far *St. Bonaventure*.

Now turning our eyes a while from the Son, let us fix them on his Blessed Mother, who was present at all he suffered. What did her heart feel, to see with her own eyes the torments he endured, as well in soul as in body? Sinking under extreme anguish, partly for the present pains he suffered, and partly for that they would prove useless to many of those he suffered for: in all which she could no ways solace him. Here her soul was pierced with a profound sorrow, and here she beheld the immensity of God's goodness, and the greatness of his Justice.

What a sword of sorrow pierced her soul, when she received him dead into her arms, and beheld all his wounds! The grief of this sorrowful Mother was so great,
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that she is worthily called the Queen of Martyrs; for she loved her dear Son a thousand times better than her own life; she would willingly have died in his place, and her sense of sorrow and compassion was so great, that *St. Bernardin* says, If the hearts of all men should split with a sense of our Saviour's Passion, her's would equal all the rest, though they died with grief. How great then must her's have been!

A Preparation for Communion, drawn from the Consideration of our Lord's Death and Burial.

NO one can doubt but that, of all other Preparations, it is the most suitable to our Lord's design, since he commands us to do it in memory of his Death; and his Apostle declares, that the death of our Redeemer is announced by receiving Communion; for he says, *As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this Chalice, you shall shew forth the Death of our Lord.*

The Sacrifice of Mass being the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross, only with this difference, that *That* was offered to the Eternal Father in a bloody Manner, and *This* in an unbloody Manner; it is truly a Monument and Commemoration
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of our Lord's Passion; and in it is represented his Death and Passion. Nay his Burial and Sepulchre are not less represented in the Communion of the Priest, as well as in the other Communicants; therefore each should endeavour to render himself a neat and well-adorned sepulchre for Christ, by means of those virtues which the sepulchre either had or would have had, if it had been endowed with reason.

Now for the practice, which may be divided into two parts, the remote and the nearer preparation. As to the first, being persuaded that as often as we communicate, we become the living sepulchre of our Lord; for that end we must apply ourselves to the exercise of piety, thereby to build a decent Sepulchre for our Saviour in the bottom of our hearts. A soul devoted to Christ Crucified, who has so often the honour to receive him in her heart, where he reposes as in his Grave, which he stains with the Vermilion of his Precious Blood, can do no less than dedicate herself wholly to him; endeavouring to adorn herself with rich Ornaments, fit for a Tomb to receive her God. The task is great, it being to prepare a dwelling, not for an earthly King, but for the great God of heaven and earth. *Solomon*, the wisest

of men, did not think seven years too much to build a Temple for the Ark of the covenant; and can we then think any time too much to prepare a place where God himself is to repose? Let us then adorn our souls, for this effect, not only seven years, but as long as we live. Did we make this our practice, as *St. Aloysius* did, what grace should we not obtain. He consecrated the whole week to this exercise. The three first days he employed in thanksgiving for the Blessed Sacrament he had received on Sunday, and the three following days in making Preparation for the next.

In order to this, we must make it our first thought in the morning, and our last over-night, to prepare in our heart a worthy Sepulchre for our dear Saviour, who, being dead for us, is desirous to repose in our hearts, as in his Grave and Sepulchre. Let us therefore be solicitous to adorn our hearts in the manner which may make them most agreeable to him. When we rise in the morning, and in time of our prayer, let us think what ornaments we may get that day, in order to it; and at night in our Examen, let us see what we have got, and be truly sorry if we have polluted

polluted our heart by sin, resolving, as much as possible, to avoid all sort of sin on that account, begging God's grace for the future. During the day, let us embrace all occasions of adorning it, performing our prayer with fervour and devotion, being ready in occasions to practise humility, patience, obedience, charity, &c. and never slipping any opportunity, by which we may embellish it. We must also polish its roughness by means of mortification, to render it more acceptable; and the history of our Saviour's sufferings should be engraven therein, which will be so, if we frequently call them to mind, especially during the Mass that precedes our Communion, in which we ought to contemplate his death, represented by the same, and dispose our heart to become his decent sepulchre.

Reflections to raise Affections for the Purgative Way.

ON these words: *He was laid in a Monument, wherein never yet any had been laid.* Consider, that if the Sepulchre, in which Christ was laid, had before been filled with foul carcases, and if it had been
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been endued with reason, what thoughts it would have had of its baseness, unworthiness, and indignity? It would doubtless have acknowledged that it was entirely unworthy of so great a Majesty; it would have extremely grieved that it had ever been polluted with such filthy guests; it would have wished for fountains of tears to wash away its odours; and as those tears could not produce a purity, fit for so great a guest, unless mixed with the Precious Blood of that Divine Saviour, it would have begged that favour of him. And encouraged by his kind inviting all to come and draw waters with joy from his fountains! it would doubtless have conceived a great desire of those waters, mixed with confidence, reverence, and ardent desires to be wholly *His*, who so lovingly makes the invitation.

Second Reflections for the Purgative Way.

ON these words: *They took the Body of Jesus, and bound it in linen clothes, with spices.* Consider how, before our Saviour's Body was laid in the Sepulchre, it was imbalmed with perfumes, and
spices,

spices, and myrrh : We must do the same, when we receive the holy Eucharist ; for this myrrh signifies penance and a detestation of sin, with which we should anoint our Lord's Body, all covered over with wounds, before we lay him in the Sepulchre of our heart. Then, being informed interiorly by him that he received those wounds in our house, we must grieve heartily for it, and with tears, proceeding both from compassion for our Saviour's sufferings, and compunction for our sins, the unhappy cause of them, we must wash those Sacred Wounds. And as by our sins we have not only wounded Christ, but ourselves also with grievous wounds, which nothing can cure but the sovereign Balsam that distills from our Saviour's wounds, let us go with an ardent desire to receive that Precious Blood by holy Communion, to the end it may cure all our wounds ; begging and confiding that Christ, the true and charitable Samaritan, will effectually heal them, provided we put no obstacle.

Reflection

Reflection to raise Affections for the Illuminative Way.

ON these words: *They laid him in a Monument that was hewed out of a Rock.* Reflect, that if the Sepulchre of Christ, being hewed out of a Rock, stood in need of polishing to render it more compleat, it would certainly have been extremely ashamed, had it been sensible of the greatness of the Guest it was to lodge, to see itself so vile and unpolished, in the presence of so great a Majesty. It would have wished to have been adorned with the purest gold, and most precious stones, to be thereby more worthy to receive so great a Lord. Then reflecting that those ornaments might be procured from the infinite liberalities of that Lord, it would have poured forth a thousand petitions for the obtaining thereof.

It would moreover have acknowledged that, being a stone, it was not capable of those due expressions of love, admiration, praise, and gratitude, yet it would have made the best acts of adoration and thanksgiving it could. It would have discovered to its beloved Guest all its defects,

defects, and would have conceived great hopes of obtaining a remedy for them, because it was never heard, that our Saviour in his life-time lodged with any, whom he did not liberally reward with his gifts. It would earnestly have begged of Christ, that, since he consecrated all things by his touch, he would do the same now to his present habitation, intreating him to polish and embellish it so, that it might be more worthy of his presence.

Second Reflections for the Illuminative Way.

ON these words : *And he laid him in his own Monument.* Consider, that in Holy Communion, we do the same that *Joseph of Arimathea* did ; we lay our Lord in our own Monument, for our Bodies are but a living Tomb for our souls ; therefore when we receive him thus into our bodies, it is burying him in the same Sepulchre with our souls. Reflect on the vileness of your body, scarce worthy to lodge your soul, and humble yourself exceedingly in the presence of so great a Majesty, who is pleased to enter so unworthy an habitation.

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At the 1st. *Domine non sum Dignus*, think, or say, Lord, I am unworthy, because you are God, and I a poor creature, between whom there is an infinite distance.

At the 2d. Say, I am so, because you are infinitely great, and I a poor worm, deservedly reputed among the vilest; the daughter of rottenness, and sister of worms.

At the 3d. Say, I am unworthy, because you are infinitely holy, and I a sinner, who by my sins have made myself worse than any creature, how vile soever. After this move yourself to hope and confidence, not grounded on your own merits, but on the merits of Christ, and his infinite clemency. Then listen to his Divine voice, who says, *Come to me, all ye that labour, and I will refresh you. My delights are to be with the children of men.*

Let your soul melt with love, and desire of your beloved; say, Lord, if your delights are to be with me, mine, by your grace, shall be to be with you; and when you possess him in your heart, expose to him all your maladies, weakneses, and infirmities, for which end lay your heart
upon

upon his heart, and conjure him, by all that is most holy, to grant you a heart according to his.

*Reflections to raise Affections for the
Unitive Way.*

*J*oseph of Arimathea taking down the body, wrapt it in a clean sindon. The Communicant is not only the Sepulchre of Christ, but becomes the very Sindon, or sheet, he was wrapt in. If that sheet had had reason and sense as you have, with what affections would it have been moved, when it was to have the happiness of embracing the Sacred Body of its Lord, who had died for all, and would stain it with the same blood he had shed for that effect.

Although it had been clean, yet, considering that there could be no cleanliness worthy of such a Guest, it would have wished for the purity of Angels; and if it had perceived any spot, it would immediately have washed it out with tears of compunction. After which, it would have unfolded itself with most inflamed desires of enjoying so great a good, and in expectation of that happiness, it would have bedewed his Sacred feet with continual

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tears;

tears ; praised him with a most eloquent silence, and often, in sweet whispers, have breathed forth these words : *Quia Amore Languet*. When it had got possession of that heavenly treasure, it would have kissed and embraced all our Redeemer's wounds, especially that of his Sacred side, and have drawn flowing waters from those sacred fountains of love ; which practice Saint *Chrysostome* particularly recommends, affirming that every communicant, as often as he frequents the sacred mysteries of the body of Christ, ought to believe that he goes to the wound of his side, to suck his most sweet and precious blood. Let us beg that, for the future, we may love him alone, who has loved us to such an excess as to give his blood and life for us.

Second Reflections for the Unitive Way.

AND they rolled a great stone to the door of the monument. This was the last ceremony they performed at the sepulchre, and it was to prevent any one's entering and stealing away the treasure that lay in it. It is what we should do as often as we go to communion ; we should lock up all

all the gates of our senses, and especially our hearts, that having received our Lord, nothing may enter in to steal him from us. Then we should lay a great stone at the door of our heart, by a firm and strong resolution, that upon no occasion we will ever suffer that Sacred treasure to be taken from us. Grieve heartily, that you have ever permitted, not only your senses, but your heart also, to wander from him, and to be led away by affection to creatures. Acknowledge and confess to his Divine Majesty, that there is nothing in creatures, in which you can find rest; and promise that you will no more seek any but in him, in whom alone it is to be found.

Having diligently shut up the gates of our senses to all created things, we must open our heart to a fervent desire of him who only can fill and satisfy it. Our dear Saviour invites us to come to him, by these words: *Come all you that thirst, to the fountains of water, &c. If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink.* Say then to him, as the Samaritan did: *Give me, O Lord, of this water, that I may drink, and never thirst more.* Offer him to the Eternal Father, in thanksgiving

for the infinite benefit of the Holy Eucharist, the body and blood of his beloved Son; for no oblation can be more divine nor more grateful to him.

Then turning to our Divine Saviour, we must kiss his wounds, and inebriate our souls with the promised waters, hearkening to him, who assures us, that he is all ours, and asks us when we will be all his. Nothing hinders him from being all ours, neither Heaven, nor his Divinity, nor the Gibbet of the Cross: what can hinder us from being all his? Let us resolve for the future that nothing shall, saying from the bottom of our heart: My Lord and my God! since you are pleased to be all mine, I desire the grace to be entirely yours. And whose should I be but my Creator's and Redeemer's, who has so many rights over me, and to whom I totally owe myself? Then let us bid adieu to all creatures, and dedicate ourselves wholly to the good-will and pleasure of God.

As our Lady was present at the Sepulchre, and, with her advice and Sacred hands, assisted *Joseph* and the rest in burying her Divine Son; so when in Communion we are making the mystical Sepulchre

pulchre of Christ, we must beg her assistance that we may perform that great work well, and endeavour in it to imitate her example. Our blessed Lady washed his Sacred wounds with her tears, she kissed and embraced them, embalming him with all kinds of perfumes, especially with the Balsam of an ardent love. All this we must endeavour to imitate, washing with our tears, not only his Sacred wounds, but also the wounds of our soul: weeping for our sins, the unhappy cause of them both, and with a tender love kissing and embracing our dear Lord's feet. But if the sweet perfumes of virtues fail us, let us beg our Lady to supply our wants, by lending us some of her's to embalm her Divine Son's Body. Then let us offer to Christ those virtues of his most blessed Mother, wishing it were in our power to anoint his Sacred Body with all manner of spices and perfumes; begging his Divine Majesty, for his own and his Sacred Mother's merits, to fix our hearts so in his love, that nothing may withdraw us any more from him.

FOUR MEDITATIONS

UPON THE

MOTIVES

*We have to love and honour our LADY;
which may serve for each Saturday of the
Month.*

I. MEDITATION.

1st **P**RELUDE. Imagine you see our Lady seated on a Throne of great glory, at the right hand of her Son; surrounded with Angels, announcing her praises, and reverencing her as the Mother of God, and their Queen.

2^d Prelude. Beg the grace to be sensible of the many motives you have to love and honour her, and that you may effectually shew your sentiments in her regard, by a zeal of propagating her honour

nour and worship, and an eagerness to imitate her virtues.

First Point.

Consider, that our Lady challenges our love and respect, as being the only one who is originally noble; all others are ennobled by being made adopted children of God; but she is conceived so in the womb of her blessed Mother Saint *Ann*, being predestinated from Eternity to be Mother of the Son of God. Holy Mother of God, how beautiful and amiable are you! And how pure! there is not the least spot in you. I heartily rejoice and give God thanks for your all-immaculate conception, as being the prerogative that pleases you most; if you had it not, and I could purchase it for you with the loss of my life, I would joyfully give it for that effect.

Second Point.

Consider how the Blessed Virgin is not only happy, in having been conceived without sin, but much more in that she never committed the least sin; and therefore

fore was ever void of the smallest spot or blemish, and always full of grace. The Holy Ghost in the Canticles says: *The number of my chosen Virgins is endless, yet my perfect one is an only one.* This perfect one is the Blessed Virgin Mary; she has no equal, for she alone never appeared before the Divine eyes in quality of a sinner; she alone was always pure, immaculate, and perfectly beautiful and amiable; she alone can say, God has possessed me from the beginning. O Sacred Queen, I infinitely rejoice, to think that it is impossible for a creature to be more pure and perfect than you are.

Third Point.

Consider, that all the perfections and prerogatives which have been distributed among other Saints, are collected together in her; God united in her person the purest virginity, with the most holy maternity; the highest contemplation with the most lively action; the most tender compassion with the most invincible courage; the most sublime dignity with the most profound humility; so that St. *Anselme* affirms, that greater perfection under God
cannot

cannot be found. She is the most beautiful work that ever came out of the Divine hands, being only less than God himself, and by a strict tie of blood with *Jesus Christ*, she enters into a degree almost Divine, in so much that he will have the concurrence of her prayers, together with his own infinite merits, to be the immediate cause of effectually obtaining our Salvation; prayers so efficacious in Heaven, that even Christ himself, from whom they have all their force and efficacy, respects them as coming from his own Mother.

II. MEDITATION.

The Preludes as before.

First Point.

CONsider, that our Lady challenges our love and respect, for her high Dignity and incomparable Sanctity. To know this, we must know who is her Son: She enjoys the straitest conjunction possible with the Sovereign increated Good, which is the highest preferment a pure creature can be assumed to, without passing the bounds

bounds of a pure creature ; and it is the operation which comes nearest of any thing to the Divinity. *St. Bonaventure*, upon those words of the Gospel, *Erat Subditus Illis*, sticks not to say that *Mary* had God for her subject.

. *Second Point.*

Consider, that it is the opinion of Divines, that the Blessed Virgin truly merited the august quality of Mother of God ; as bringing on her side such dispositions for receiving this extraordinary Dignity, that it was very reasonable God should confer it upon her, and the Church constantly repeats unto her, that she merited to have *Jesus* in her womb ; nay, *St. Ambrose* expressly says, she was worthy that the Son of God should be born of her.

Whatever Idea we frame to ourselves of the Blessed Virgin's grace, though never so great, it will fall short of the truth, because it can never come up to the height of the employment God designed her. On the top of those very mountains, the Angelical Spirits, is laid the foundation of this stately edifice, the Virgin Mary ; she began where others end. The reason of
this

this Almighty God himself tells, viz. because he himself was made man in her Womb. If such was her beginning, what must her progress and end be? Since, each moment of her life, she went on increasing in perfection. No one can conceive, much less express the extreme beauty of her soul; all we know is, that she is the most wonderful and most beautiful work that ever came out of the Almighty's Hands; (except the Humanity of her Divine Son) and that she is only less than God.

Third Point.

Consider, that it is the general opinion, that the Blessed Virgin lived twenty-four years after our Saviour's death; if so, according to the custom of the Primitive Church, she communicated every day; and that Sacrament giving grace proportionable to the dispositions of the receiver, since her dispositions were certainly beyond all that can be conceived, it cannot be doubted but that the treasure of grace she received from her Son, was beyond all expression: Nothing can fathom the depth of her merits, she being not only a sea, as her name imports, but an Abyss of Grace.

III. M E D I T A T I O N .

*The Preludes still the same.**First Point.*

CONsider, that our Blessed Lady challenges our love, because she is the most beloved of God, who chose her before all, and would have her co-operate with him for our Salvation, by sacrificing her only Son for his Glory and our Redemption; for Christ was not less the real Son of the Virgin, than he was the true Son of God the Father; and as the Eternal Father, for his own Glory, and for the safety of mankind, delivered him up to death, so the Blessed Virgin did the same for the same end; offering that part of the Divine Victim Christ, which belonged to her, and that with readiness and constancy of mind. For which reason *St. Bernard* piously supposes that the Eternal Father said to her: *Because you have not spared your Only Son, but have offered him for my Glory and the Salvation of Mankind, there shall be nothing I will not do for you in recompence. I will give you a numerous posterity of chosen people; I will constitute you*
Mother

Mother of the living; you shall have in custody the treasury of my liberalities; you shall distribute all my graces; you shall direct my Justice; in a word, you shall have the Sovereign command over my heart: my clemency shall be subject to the law of your tongue, it being fitting that I should bestow as many blessings upon the earth as you shall think good to desire. Thus far St. Bernard.

Second Point.

Consider, that Almighty God loves the Blessed Virgin to such a degree, that he will have us receive all graces through her hands; and the devout Father *Suarez* infers, that his Divine Majesty loves her alone, more than all the other Saints and Angels together. *St. Ildephonse* and *St. Bernard* say, that the Redemption of this perfect creature (by which she was preserved from ever incurring the least sin) was one of the chiefest works the Eternal word had in view when he took upon him our human nature. Saint *Bernard* also says, that for her sake, that is, to make her Sovereign Queen of Heaven and Earth, God made this World. Thus God Almighty loved the Sacred Virgin: wherefore

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fore we ought to love her, for love of his Divine Majesty.

Third Point.

Consider, that God's favours shew his love, and make the greatness of the Saints. Those he bestowed on the Blessed Virgin are incomparably above whatever he has bestowed upon any other; therefore by consequence she is the most beloved and most eminent in Sanctity of any. The three Divine Persons have enriched her with the most precious of gifts, God the Father having taken her for his Daughter, God the Son for his Mother, and God the Holy Ghost for his Spouse; no advantage is wanting to her, nothing can be added to greatness, she is established Queen of Heaven and Earth.

IV. M E D I T A T I O N.

The Preludes as before.

First Point.

CONSIDER, that our blessed Lady challenges our love for the love and affection

affection she bears to us, and the favours she has done us, and benefits she has bestowed upon us, which may all be comprehended in this; she has given us our Jesus, and by giving him, what is there in the abyss of the Divine Treasure which she has not given us? It was not without knowing the value of the gift, for she knew it perfectly well, and earnestly wished us all the good which was to be derived from him to us.

Richard of St. Victor says, She desired the salvation of all; she sought it, and by her prayers obtained it; nay, it was effected by her means, and therefore she is called the Safety of the world.

In a gift, the love of the giver is chiefly to be regarded and esteemed; in those the Blessed Virgin bestows on us, Love has the greatest part. None can express her love and tenderness for us; for if she casts her eyes on herself, she cannot but reflect on the last words her Son spoke to her in our favour: *Woman, Behold your Son.* It is impossible she should not love us, with the greatest affection, after such a recommendation.

Second Point.

Consider, that our Lady finds several incentives to love us with all tenderness and affection; for if she looks on herself (as we said before) she sees that she is in quality of our Mother, left us as such by the will and testament of her dying Son; and to comply with the duty of a Mother, favours alone are not sufficient, Love and Affection must be the principle from which they proceed; therefore, if at the time that her Divine Son declared her our Mother, she had not found in herself the bowels of tenderness and compassion for us, our Lord had certainly bestowed them upon her that she might bear that character. If she turns her eyes towards Almighty God, she acknowledges him as the original of all her affection to us, so that her love for God is the measure of her love to us.

If then her heart, now she reigns in Heaven, is a furnace of divine love, seven times hotter than the hearts of all the other Saints, it follows, that their love for us is far less than that which burns in the breast of this our Heavenly Mother. And she being now invested with such power and authority, there is no doubt

doubt but she makes use of it for our advantage: and though at present we cannot discover the number and qualities of the favours we have received by her intercession, yet, after this life, we shall see the many effectual graces she has obtained for us, and how she concurred in a singular manner with all the favours and graces, which the Divine Mercy has bestowed upon us.

Third Point.

Consider, that we cannot doubt of our Lady's seeing all our necessities in the Divine Word, as in a clear and spotless mirror: for if Almighty God makes them known to our Guardian Angels, to the end they may help and assist us, it cannot be supposed that he would keep them secret from his own Mother, to whom he has recommended the safety of all Mankind, much more than he has to any Angel the safety of any one in particular. If then she knows and sees all our necessities, who can think that the sight of so much misery, in creatures so helpless of themselves, does not move her compassion to implore her Divine

Son's mercy for them, that they may find speedy relief to their miseries, since asking and obtaining is one and the same thing with her. We may apprehend, that finding nothing in us which deserves her affection, her love for us is totally extinguished; but it is quite the contrary, since our demerits, and want of motives in us to deserve her love, concur in great part to make us objects of it.

Our Holy Father Saint *Augustin* says, that the love which burns in our Lady's breast, and her care and solicitude for us, as much surpasses those of all the Saints, as she surpasses them in dignity, and love to God.

Several Means of honouring our Lady, and testifying our Love to her.

The First, and most acceptable, is to have her example before our eyes, and to endeavour to imitate her as our dear Mother, Lady, and Mistress. Now, though she was eminent in all virtues, yet the following ones are those she valued most, and what will render us most dear to her Divine Son, and herself.

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The First is her Humility, which made her most pleasing to God, as she says in her Canticle : *God has had regard to the Humility of his Servant, therefore all Nations shall call me blessed.* And St. Bernard says she pleased God by her Virginity, but she conceived him by her Humility.

The time we ought chiefly to practise it, is when we are to communicate; Communion being, as it were, a new Incarnation, for the same Son of God, whom the Angel called Son of the most High, and whom our Lady then conceived, comes into our breast by Communion : we must therefore endeavour to make our Humility such, that it may supply for what we want of purity, (though we have cleansed our conscience by confession) and in imitation of our Blessed Lady, we must believe, as she did, that all that is foretold us of the wonderful effects of this Sacrament, will, through the mercy of God, be accomplished in us, although it seems impossible to us. Then, with a profound Humility and sense of our unworthiness, let each of us say : Behold the handmaid of our Lord, me his unworthy creature, let it be done to me according to his merciful designs ; it is to obey his Will that

I approach to receive him, though I am most unworthy of the favour.

The Second Virtue we must imitate, is her constant and perfect obedience to the Will of God. *Be it done to me according to his word.* The same we ought to say in all occasions, whether we be in peace or in trouble, whether we have sensible devotion or not; and in fine, whatever circumstances we are in, God's Will be done, readily obeying it, which way soever it be made known to us. This our Lady always did, by which she conceived and carried him in her heart, before she conceived him in her womb. And this spiritual Conception of him was more available than the corporal, which only made her Mother of God, whereas the other rendered her the worthy Mother of God.

This Privilege we may enjoy, according to our dear Lord's own words, who says, *Those that do the Will of my Father, are my Sister, Brother, and Mother.* Nothing will make us more pleasing to our Lady, than the imitating her in this virtue; it was the advice she gave at the marriage feast of *Cana in Galilee*, bidding them perform whatever her Divine Son should order them.

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The Third Virtue we must try to imitate, is her invincible Courage and Patience in all she suffered in the Passion of her Divine Son. To know what that was, we must measure it by the greatness of her love; her love for her dear Son surpassed that of all other Mothers, and she had a clear knowledge of what her Son suffered; for besides being informed of it by the Prophets, and by that Divine Son himself, she beheld it with her own eyes, and felt in her heart what she suffered in his Body. None can conceive the greatness of her sufferings, which she bore with an infinite Patience, standing all the while by her Son on the Cross: her grief was without comparison! None but her Divine Son could surpass it, and therefore she is deservedly styled Queen of Martyrs. What obligation have we to love and serve her, who for our Salvation consented to the death of her own Son! she could with less difficulty have given her own life. Can we, after this, think much of sacrificing, for her sake, whatever is most dear to us?

Most dear Lady, and Mother of my Saviour, obtain me the Grace to imitate you in these Virtues, especially in patiently bearing

bearing whatever sufferings of mind and body Almighty God shall permit to fall upon me, and that with an unshaken constancy, never yielding to dejection in any of them, thereby to imitate the example you have given me.

Other means of honouring our Lady, and testifying our love to her, are :

1st, To consider her as our Mother, and make recourse to her as such.

The last thing our dear Saviour recommended on the Cross to us, in the Person of St. *John*, was *Ecce Mater tua*, behold your Mother ; let us ever do so ; especially when it pleases God to permit us to suffer, that we may learn of her how to comport ourselves therein. What an honour is it to have the Mother of God for our Mother ! We must endeavour not to render ourselves unworthy of it, and therefore must avoid sin, for that only can make us unworthy of her Adoption and Love. O most dear Lady ! shew yourself a Mother to my soul, for the sake of your dear Son I beg it, and then my Salvation will be secure.

2d, To respect and honour her in her Pictures, Images, and little Altars dedicated to her.

3d,

3d, To fast the Vigils of her Feasts, or do some Penance, and (if a secular) give Alms.

4th, To confess and communicate on her Festivals.

5th, To let no day pass without practising some Devotion or duty in her Honour, as saying our Beads, Hearing Mass in her Honour, &c.

6th, To get Mass said in thanksgiving to Almighty God for creating her so perfect: and for the immense treasure of Grace, Sanctity, and Glory, which he has conferred on her incomparable Soul. For as there is no proportion between a limited thanks, and a gift of infinite value, so by doing this, God himself becomes the Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for his own gift. This will be a most agreeable token of our love to her; all the Saints together cannot give her a greater nor a more acceptable one.

Meditations for each Sunday of the Month.

FIRST MEDITATION

FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY.

*Of the End for which God-created
Man.*

I. POINT.

CONSIDER, that the End for which you were created, was to love God your Creator with the whole extent of your Heart, of your Soul, and of your Strength, and to labour for the increase of his Glory who gave you your being, and created your Soul immortal, and capable to enjoy him for Eternity.

Cast back your thoughts to a hundred years past, what was you then? and who would have missed you if you had never been? yet you were so happy as to dwell in the heart and thoughts of God from Eternity! and he disposed all created things for your use. He framed you in your Mother's Womb, created your Soul a perfect

fect Picture of his Divine Nature, and has ever since protected you. Nay not content with that, as to his child he has designed you a future inheritance above; what obligations have you to him for preferring you to so many that would have served him better?

It was no ways necessary that God should create you, and place you in this World; but since he has been pleased to do so, it is necessary that you should love, obey, and serve him. All-powerful God as he is, he cannot discharge you from that obligation, how then can you dispense with yourself? *Our Lord made all things for himself*, nor could he make them for any other End. You having received all from him, are consequently all his. Have you not lived hitherto as if you belonged only to yourself? and subsisted by yourself, making your own honour, pleasure, and interest your End, as if you had been placed in this World only to sport, play, eat, drink, and seek your own Satisfaction and Interest? whereas he created you that you might serve and worship him here, and so attain to that everlasting life he has designed for you hereafter. Admire God's infinite Patience in having

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suffered

suffered you so long without sinking you into hell for such ungrateful proceedings !

II. POINT.

Consider that God, having given you a being, is pleased to conserve the same ; which is still a greater favour than the first : for as St. Augustin says, each moment of conservation is as it were a new creation : because if God did not conserve us, we should cease to be. Our creation was but the work of a moment, but this is continual without interruption, in which his power appears not less than his love. If then we are so strictly obliged to be wholly his because he gave us our being, how much more are we so for his continual concurrence to preserve the same ? And how much are we obliged to love and serve him for it ? Were this not commanded us, justice requires it of us ; for what more just than to serve him from whom we have received all that we have ? And the very end for which God conserves our being is, that serving him here in this life, we may for ever enjoy him in the next. He himself will be our reward.

Admire

Admire the prodigies of God's love that will so bountifully reward our complying with this duty ; that his greatness will for all Eternity be employed in making us great ; his wisdom in contenting our knowledge ; and his goodness in replenishing our hearts with Joy, Love, and Bliss ! How justly are they punished with an Eternity of Misery, who make so slight of this as to prefer some sordid pleasure and satisfaction before it ? Hell is even too small a punishment for them.

III. POINT.

Consider yet a far greater favour, for which you are still more obliged to God than for your creation and conservation, to wit, Redemption. If then you owe all you are, and all you are able to do, for your creation and conservation, what do you owe, and what should you render to God for your Redemption ? To create you cost him but one word ; but to redeem you, it cost him the very last drop of his blood, which he shed after so cruel and painful a manner, that the very thoughts and apprehension he had of it cast him into a bloody sweat.

The Love God shews in this our Redemption, is inconceivable; so that it may be truly said that his Divine Majesty, all-powerful as he is, could do no more for man than what he has done, by becoming himself man, and dying for him; by which he has not only delivered us from eternal damnation, but also purchased for us a right and title to the kingdom of heaven; endowing us with grace, and leaving us the Sacrament of Penance as a means to recover it whenever we have unhappily lost it by sin. And to strengthen us in good, he gives himself as food to our souls; and that we may be provided of an offering worthy of the greatness of his Father, which might satisfy for our sins and obtain all we stand in need of, he leaves himself in the holy Eucharist, that assisting at Mass we may offer him for the said ends.

What could God do more for us than he has done? If, after all, we are so ungrateful as not to comply with our duty to him, which is to decline evil and do good, we truly deserve eternal punishment.

Reflections and Resolutions.

Reflect and see if you have employed the life and being you have received for the
end

end for which God bestowed it upon you, which was, that you might honour and serve him here, and enjoy him for eternity hereafter ; or if, on the contrary, you have not made pleasure and satisfaction your end. If you have, be confounded at your ingratitude, and admire God's patience in suffering you so long, and not taking away the life you have so ill employed.

Look back with fear upon your past years. How long have you been in this World ? And what have you done for God that may deserve this reward ? You will soon come to the end of your life, without perhaps having made one step towards the end for which you were created ; what terror will this your negligence be to you at your death !

Be convinced that if you comply not with the End for which God created you, whatever good qualifications you may have, you are really worth nothing : for we truly are but what we are in God's sight : and if we are not right in his eyes, we are but a burden to the earth, and only fit, as barren trees, to be cast into the fire.

Your happiness in this life, as well as in the next, depends upon your performing your duty to God. St. Augustin says,

speaking of himself, *Whilst I was ill with you, my God, I was ill with myself; and whilst I made war against you, I was in trouble: for you have ordained it, and so it is that every inordinate Passion is its own punishment.*

You require services from your inferiors, yet refuse to serve God: How unjust is this! you owe all to God, and he has infinitely more right to dispose of you, and all that belongs to you, than a carver has to dispose of the statue he has made, which he may either destroy or conserve, without rendering account to any; or a Master of his slave, he having bought you, and given for you a price of far more value than the life of all men together. Therefore St. Paul says, we are no more our own, but belong to Christ, insomuch that we cannot lawfully serve any but him, no more than a slave, who can do nothing for himself or any other, but must do all for his Master.

If the Jews would not permit the money that Jesus was sold for to be put into their treasury, because it was the price of the Blood and Life of a man; how then can we employ ourselves, who are the price of that Blood, in any other use than for him that shed it for us?

Let

Let us then resolve, for the future, to live for him who died for us. What more reasonable! he is unworthy of life that refuses this, and not only deserves hell! but that a greater hell should be created for him.

The Second Meditation for the Second Sunday.

Of Death.

First Prelude. Imagine yourself by a dying Person now in his Agony.

Second Prelude. Ask the Grace to know what passes at that hour, that you may square your following death by it.

F I R S T P O I N T.

The Death of a Sinner.

BEHOLD him agonizing between two eternities, oppressed with pains unquiet in conscience, full of anguish, tempted by the devil, terrified with the certain appearance of death, and the uncertainty of what will follow after it. All his joys and pleasures at an end, his designs broken, he must leave all: nothing is left him but a winding-sheet, grief, and remorse. He has lost all, truly all! grief and anguish surround

surround him on every side; from the memory of past sins, which then will appear in their own colours: their number and deformity will affrighten him; the devil will do his utmost to cast him into despair, the severity of God's Judgments demanding account of every idle word, the loss of so much time spent in vanity, with the neglect of so many helps afforded him by God for his salvation.

The pleasures and riches he leaves behind will trouble him, being forced to leave all he loved and delighted in; for all will then be taken from him. *O death!* says Ecclesiasticus, *how bitter is thy memory to a man who has peace in his riches!* that body he has been so tender of, shall be the food of vermin, and his soul neglected for love of it, shall burn in hell: which way soever he turns himself, he can see nothing to comfort him, but all to afflict him.

What an agony will he have when his soul is to go forth of his body to be judged by that God, whose laws he has so often violated! preferring that of flesh and blood before it; making use of what God gave him, to offend his Divine Majesty and damn himself: as also to see his blindness in preferring earth to Heaven, a moment
to

to a whole eternity; the body to the soul. Then he will beg for time to rectify his mistakes, but it shall not be granted. How much does it concern us to use time well while we have it, and to do now what we shall then wish to have done! to those that do so, death will be sweet and comfortable.

SECOND POINT.

The Death of the Just.

Though death is so terrible to a sinner, it is not so to the Just, who having used their endeavours to keep and observe God's law, they confide then in his mercies, and the merits of Christ, that they shall see and enjoy him for all Eternity. Not, but they have a fear of death, which is natural to all, but that fear is without anxiety; they willingly submit and accept of it, since it is God's will and good pleasure: so making a virtue of necessity, they are content to forsake and leave all things of this world, which at that hour will appear truly vile.

What comfort will their fidelity to God, and the observance of his law, then give them! all they have suffered upon that account, and their present pains patiently borne,

borne, will increase their crown and shorten their purgatory. How happy will they be at that hour, having served and suffered for a God, whose perfections are infinite : with whom they hope to reign for ever, with an infallible security never to lose, or be separated from him. Their pains and labours are at an end, but the reward they are going to receive will last for ever.

THIRD POINT.

Of the Certainty of Death, and Uncertainty of the Time and Manner.

That you are to die is most certain, the sentence was pronounced at the beginning of the world ; none has ever escaped it, nor can fly from it a moment beyond the time prefixed by God. On the other side, nothing more uncertain than the time, manner, and place. The uncertainty of which ought to keep us always on our guard ; for we know not whether it will be soon or late, at sea or at land, by a sudden and violent death, or by a natural one ; in the state of grace or of sin ; all which is unknown to us, and God will have it so, that we may be always ready.

How

How many hath death unexpectedly stolen away while they were eating, sleeping, laughing, playing ! and therefore Almighty God warns us to be ready at all hours, since we know not the hour in which the Lord of the house will come ; and it concerns us very much not to be found unprepared. For to perish once, is to be lost for ever. If we fail the first time, we can never repair it ; and no less than a whole Eternity of happiness or misery depends upon it.

How can we dare to live in a state that would be our eternal ruin, if we died in it ? No concern, however great, can equal this ! how mad and foolish are we if we neglect the precautions necessary for a happy death ! whatever pains we take on that account we shall never regret ; but if we are wanting in so great a concern, we shall for ever lament it with fruitless and never-ending tears.

Reflections and Resolutions.

Your death depends upon your life. Such as is your life such will be your death. The actions of our life paints the picture of our death. How can we love in a moment

ment what we have not loved during life, or hate at our death what we have loved all our life?

What judgment will you frame at the hour of your death, of all the greatness and vanities of this world? what will you carry with you of those treasures you have got together? *fool, says God, this night will I demand thy soul, and to whom shall all that belong, which thou hast got with so much pains?*

If you were now to die, are you ready? Is your soul in a good state? Are your affairs settled and in good order? If you are wise, you will now do without delay what you will then wish to have done.

To damn yourself for ungrateful children, who will scarce thank you for what you have done for them, and who cannot retrieve your soul when once it is lost, is the greatest of follies! to lose your soul for goods or riches which you must leave, and perhaps much sooner than you think, is still a greater folly! put the case, you might enjoy them even for a hundred years, what is that compared to Eternity! when Scripture says a thousand years is but as one moment! and would you for that put yourself in danger of eternal torments?

Resolve

Resolve then, that for the future your chief care shall be to live in such a manner, that when death seizes you, you may reasonably hope to be eternally happy, your conscience not accusing you of any mortal sin; for not to be careful of this, is to run a great risque of your salvation, since death may come on the sudden, and sickness may deprive you of your senses, or pain hinder you from any serious thought.

Prudence also requires of you that you prevent the time, and do even now, in regard to your temporal affairs, what you would be glad then to have done; for besides that it will be a great ease and comfort to you at that hour to have settled all things, it will prevent their being disposed of contrary to your inclination.

Provide yourself with motives of hope and confidence, for there is nothing you will stand in greater need of at that hour. Habituate yourself during life, strongly to confide in the mercies of God and in the merits of Christ; nothing pleases God more, and it is the best means to secure your salvation: you have the word of truth for it, that none ever confided in God and was lost; it is there that the enemy, at that hour, endeavours to make man despair.

Daily beg the grace of a happy death, and perform some devotions to our blessed Lady to obtain that favour for you, since she never intercedes for any one in vain. Endeavour always to say the Ave Maria devoutly, and you will have the comfort at your death to have as often begged her intercession for a happy one, as you shall have recited it.

Motives for Confidence in GOD, and the Practice of it.

Almighty God promises those that confide in him, that they shall abound in all graces and blessings; that nothing shall be wanting to them, for that his eyes are fixed upon them that hope in him; that his mercies shall surround them on all sides; that he himself will be by them, and be their defence in the day of tribulation. He assures them that he bestows his graces, and the effects of his mercy, proportionably to the trust and confidence they put in him, that those that confide in him shall know truth; that is, he will manifest himself to them, and will grant them all they ask with confidence.

It seems as if our Lord thought he could never say enough, in many places of Holy Scripture, to testify how much this confidence

fidence is delightful to him, and how he favours and loves those that confide and entirely abandon themselves to his paternal Providence. He told a servant of his, that the filial confidence of a Christian soul was like the eye that wounds the heart of the lover; and that it offers violence to his mercies, for that he could not but assist those that confided in him; and also that he would favour those that have an humble confidence above their merits in this world and the next; and the more they confide and are persuaded of his goodness, the more they should gain, it being impossible for them not to obtain what they firmly confide they shall, having his promise for it.

To strengthen our confidence, he assumes the sweetest names, and answers them with real effects; as Friend, Advocate, Physician, Pastor, Brother, Father, Spouse; and in divers places of Holy Scripture he tells us, that he has continual care of us, and that he carries us, and will for ever carry us in his bosom, in his heart, and in his bowels; and though a mother should forget the child of her womb, yet he never would forget us, for we are written in his hands that he may always have us in view. Nay, he assures us that he loves us as his Father loves him; and that he will have

us be where he is; that is, rest with him, in the bosom of his Father for all eternity.

If we have offended him, he promises that if we return to him with repentance, resolving to amend and put our trust in his goodness, that he will receive us and forget our offences. After all this, and all he has suffered for us, Shall we harbour any doubt? Those that hope not in you, my God, know you not; for you will sooner cease to be God than cease to be good and merciful.

God is not satisfied with only promising to pardon the penitent, but he takes an oath of it, and swears by himself: *As I live*, saith our Lord, *I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.* Why then, my soul, art thou sad? And why dost thou trouble me? Say with the Just, Who ever hoped in God and was lost? His mercies are far greater than all my sins, and than all the sins of the whole world.

The trust and confidence we put in God, makes us become of man, God; of weak, strong; of poor, rich; and of miserable, happy. We ought never to confide more in God than when all seems most desperate; never to fear less, than when all appears most terrible; nor ever to abandon ourselves

selves more entirely to him, than when we think ourselves most abandoned by him.

My God and my hope, I abandon myself to you, I put my trust and confidence totally in you; you cannot permit me to go astray, let me fall, or betray me, whilst I depend and trust in you: no, 'tis impossible for me to miscarry or be lost whilst I place my whole confidence in you.

To know our sins and miseries without knowing God's mercies, is what causes despair. But to be sensible of his infinite mercies when we reflect on our sins and miseries, is what creates confidence and joy. Jesus is not only a God, but also a God Mediator, and a God Saviour. Jesus would not be Jesus, if we could take away his mercies; nor he would not be a Saviour, if he had no tenderness for sinners.

The Third Meditation for the Third Sunday.

Of Judgment.

FIRST Prelude. Imagine that your soul having quitted your body, is presented before the tribunal of God, to receive the sentence pronounced for or against her.

Second Prelude. Beg the grace that this consideration may move you so to spend the remainder of your life, that you may be able

to render a good account in that dreadful day.

I. POINT.

Consider the world as a prison, wherein all mankind, as malefactors, are detained; and that they are called out one after another, by the supreme Judge, to give an account of all their talents, natural and supernatural; and of the use they have made of them, of the wealth and means God has given them, and of the years they have past in this world, which were granted them for the attaining a happy eternity. This account many are actually a giving this very moment, God having called some of your fellow-prisoners from this world, to render him a just account of what they owe him. 1st, For their creation, he having given them a being that they might honour, love, and serve him here, and enjoy him for eternity. 2dly, For their redemption, by which he has not only freed them from eternal misery, but purchased for them an eternal happiness with the price of the life and blood of a Godman; for each drop of which they must be accountable. 3dly, For their baptism, by which they were made children of God, and received a right to an eternal bliss. 4thly, For being called to the true faith,
and

and for having so often pardoned them their sins in the Sacrament of penance, and given them his Sacred Body in the Holy Eucharist. See and consider what account you shall be able to give if God should call you now to render it.

II. POINT.

Consider that the moment the soul forsakes the body, it shall be judged, and that so strictly! even to the least idle word, and deliberate thought. And that the judgment then pronounced will be irrevocable, no appeal allowed from the sentence, which is no sooner given but executed, without excuse or delay. Think what will be the fear of a soul standing before her judge, with her good and bad actions by her, which will accompany her to her everlasting reward or punishment, and will be so narrowly looked into, that not a word or thought will escape, nor a quarter of an hour mispent, but what will appear: and according to what each has received he shall be judged; those to whom more has been given, more will be demanded.

The matter of our judgment will be all the good and evil we have done, which are seeds that will fructify for eternity, either in eternal happiness or misery. We shall be

be judged not only for what we have done, but for what we ought to have done, and have not done, and for what we have occasioned others to do; and for what we might have prevented, and through human respects did not, or have contributed to, by our silence, negligence, or ill example.

The two Books by which we shall be judged, are the Gospel and our own conscience: the first will shew us what we ought to have done, and the other what we have done. What confusion will it be to a soul to have all her committed evil and omitted good exposed, when it shall be said, *behold the man and his works!* a comparison shall be made with those that have received far less from Almighty God, and have served him far better.

Consider, whilst you have time, whether the good you have done can bear poise with the evil you have committed. What heroical acts of virtue have you ever practised? what have you ever done or suffered for the increase of God's glory? if so happy as to have done your duty, what joy will it be to have those words addressed to you by the judge: *Come, you blessed of my Father, and receive, no more the cross as in your life, but the reward for having carried it; possess the kingdom and crown prepared for you,*
from

from the creation of the world. No human heart is capable to conceive the transport of joy which those words will produce! endeavour then to live so well that you may deserve to hear them.

III. POINT.

Our Lord says, I will search Jerusalem with lamps. And if Jerusalem, that is, the Saints, how much more Babylon, that is sinners! if the just themselves will fear and tremble to appear before Almighty God, what will be the terror of the wicked, knowing themselves guilty of great crimes, when the least deliberate ill thought will be punished! They will even desire the mountains to fall upon them to hide them from his sight, but nothing shall be able to do it, though they shall never see the beatifical vision; for that would make them happy, which they are not to be for one moment, having rendered themselves unworthy of it. If the devil would willingly suffer all the torments of hell to see the face of God for a moment, what will be their rage and despair to think they might have enjoyed it, not a moment only, but for a whole eternity, and are deprived of it through their own fault!

The

The witnesses that will rise against them will be their own conscience, holy Scripture, good Books, Sermons, and good Example. The devils will shew them the sins they have committed, with their circumstances. The good Angel will alledge his endeavours. And above all, their having rendered the examples and doctrine, labours and Blood of Christ useless, will be objected against them, and condemn them. Besides their sins of commission, those of omission will stand against them, having neglected the good they ought to have done, and omitted to make use of their gifts and talents, natural and supernatural; as strength, health, wealth, and time, according to the Divine Will.

The Judge having given the definitive Sentence for an eternity, with those dreadful words: *Go, you cursed, into hell fire prepared for the devil and his followers.* Presently they will be hauled away by the devils, to whom they will be delivered up to be tormented for eternity. Endeavour so to consider this dreadful truth as to prevent it from befalling you, for it is yet in your power. God being so good as to put the pen into your hand, take notice that your sentence will be what is written by your actions in this world. How unpardonable will you be if you are unhappy,

happy, since you have it in your own power!

Reflections and Resolutions.

It is in your power to blot out your offences by the tears of penance. You may also, with Moses, resist or overcome the Almighty by the arms of Prayer. He is also to be gained by money given in Charity, and is so tender as to be moved to pity and mercy by our tears, and appeased and satisfied by penance and change of manners.

You may as yet appeal from his justice to his mercy, and oblige him to blot out the sentence of your condemnation; but after death he is neither to be resisted, moved, nor gained: he will then judge in rigour, and do justice without mercy. His love will inkindle his anger; and as his love for us has been infinite, so his anger against our ingratitude will be infinite.

Reflect what a confusion it will be to you to have the whole history of your life exposed, all you have done, and all you have omitted to do, which you ought to have done; all that God has done for you, and all you have done against him; his goodness to you, and your ingratitude to him!

If you are wise, you will prevent this confusion by an humble accusing yourself of your sins, and satisfying for them by penance:

penance: make use of those following most powerful means for your security: 1st, Charity and Alms deeds. 2dly, Pardon from your heart whoever has offended you, for in this God will have you be his model, and will treat you as you treat others; therefore be sure to pardon entirely, if you desire to be pardoned. 3dly, Do not judge nor condemn any, not even in thought; and you shall not be condemned; you have Christ's promise for it. Lastly, never fail daily to beg our Blessed Lady to obtain you a favourable sentence, for she is all-powerful with God.

*The Fourth Meditation for the Fourth Sunday,
Of Hell.*

1st Prelude. Descend in spirit to hell, the prison of God's justice! full of flames, fire and smoke, and of all sorts of torments that can torment and punish the souls of those that die in mortal sin.

2d Prelude. Beg of God such a lively apprehension of those torments that it may keep you from ever deserving to feel them.

I. POINT.

Scripture calls it a furnace which ever burns, and never is extinguished. A prison where the damned are bound in chains of fire. A land of malediction, and of all
sorts.

sorts of misery, where the wretched souls are heaped upon one another like faggots in a great fire. The lake of God's wrath, a pond of fire and sulphur, into which are plunged those who have passed their lives in pleasures and delights. A land of darkness, where never any ray of light shall enter. The devil's house, where he rages and torments the damned in quality of executioner of God's justice. O what land! what a house! what a dwelling! O my God, how great an evil is sin, that you are obliged to punish it so severely! O my soul, what do we fear, if we fear not hell!

To declare more in particular what the damned suffer, we must know that both the soul and the body having sinned, there are torments allotted for each. In hell there are three sorts of pains: the pain of sense, the pain of loss, and the worm of conscience. As to the first, no pain, nor even all the pains, martyrdoms, or cruelties put together that ever have been, or could possibly be invented or practised in this world, have any proportion, not only with all the pains, but with the very least pain of hell. The greatest fire or hottest forge are no more than painted fires in comparison with the infernal flames; our fire being created by God for our use and comfort, but the fire of hell he has created purely to punish

and torment those unhappy souls who are surrounded with it. Fire above them, fire beneath them, fire on the right hand, fire on the left! add to this the other torments proper to each sense or member: the eyes will be afflicted with the horrible and terrifying view of the devils, so dreadful, that the sight of one of them would frighten the most courageous man out of his senses. The ears will be tormented with fearful horrible howlings and lamentations of the damned cursing each other. The taste with bitter tears and raging hunger and thirst never to be quenched.

Though devils will strive to outdo one another in cruelty to the damned, whom they will torment in all the parts of their bodies and faculties of their souls, though not all alike, but each according to the number and greatness of their sins: and this without hopes of relief, or one moment's solace, but for all Eternity, which renders them inconsolable, and will make them suffer each moment what they must eternally suffer, plunged in an unexplicable grief, without the least consolation not so much as a drop of water to quench their raging thirst, that is to say, not the least mitigation. Yet whatever conceit we frame of their sufferings, it falls still short of what they suffer. O dreadful Eternity, what man

can

can think of you, and not amend his life !

II. POINT.

Consider the pain of loss, which will be more terrible and afflicting than all the other pains. It consists in feeling and knowing that they have lost the vision of God, and consequently all good. To lose God, to be eternally separated from God, to be hated by God, is an infinite and terrible evil ! and in place of the company and society of Angels and Saints, they are surrounded with innumerable devils. A prison and dungeon, in place of a kingdom designed by God, and purchased for them by Jesus Christ, with the last drop of his Precious Blood, which upon such easy terms they might have enjoyed for all Eternity ; yet have lost it by their own fault ! Were it but a temporal kingdom lost for a trifle, and miserably exchanged for a dungeon, what a cutting grief would it be to the person who had made such a foolish bargain ! this gives a slight idea of the pain of loss, but is nothing in comparison with it.

III. POINT.

Consider the third pain, which is the worm of Conscience, that continually gnaws them, and will do so for all eternity ; never letting them rest for a moment,

but continually representing to them all their crimes and ingratiitudes to God, who not only gave them their being, but also died for them, to save them from the misery into which they have plunged themselves, through their own fault, when they might so easily have escaped it. What grief, despair, and rage will it cause in them ! how will they curse each other that has contributed to it ! children will curse their Parents, and Parents their children ; Masters their Servants, and Servants their Masters, as being in part the cause of the torments they endure ; which would be more tolerable if they could but once have an end ; but that is their greatest torment, to know that their misery will be endless. O never-ending Eternity, how prodigious is your extent ! each moment beginning and never coming to an end ! O ever which never ends, but lasts for ever !

Reflections and Resolutions.

Reflect on your obligations to God in not having permitted you to fall into hell, where you should have been long ago, had you been treated according to your deserts, since one mortal sin deserves that punishment. And also for giving you time to see and consider these things, that you may prevent them from happening to you.

Follow

Follow St. Bernard's advice, and descend in spirit into hell, while you are living, that you may not feel after your death what is there suffered; where you must have taken your eternal lodging, if God had taken you out of this life after such and such a sin.

Accustom yourself, in all troubles or afflictions, to compare them with what you would have suffered in hell, if God's mercies had not kept you from falling into it: And you will find you have no reason to complain or to think you have any injustice or wrong done to you: for nothing can be so in regard to any one that has but once offended God mortally; since such an one is worthy of all evil, and unworthy of all good, which is the state of the damned.

Fear sin above all things, and avoid it with all possible care, since one is sufficient to cause your damnation.

Endeavour to satisfy for the sins you have committed, by patiently bearing all the trials that God shall permit to befall you, if you cannot do worthy works of penance. Secondly, by giving alms: no money can you lay out more to your own advantage; and you will be truly blameable, and no ways to be pitied, if you have it in your power, and do not do it. You would befriend yourself more by refusing neces-

aries to your body, and giving this advantage to your soul, than by a contrary proceeding.

Be devout to our Blessed Lady, and daily petition her to intercede for you to her Son, that you may never more commit what deserves such severe punishments.

*The fifth Meditation for the fifth Sunday.
Of Heaven.*

First Prelude. Imagine that above the Elementary Heavens, in which the sun, moon, and stars are fixed, is the Palace and Court of the King of kings, Almighty God, which he has built to entertain his Elect in.

Second Prelude. Beg his Divine Majesty to give you the Grace to conceive, in some measure, what he has there prepared for those that love and serve him.

I. POINT.

Heaven is a complication of all good, exempt from the least evil : where the body as well as the soul shall enjoy eternal happiness ; and that so great, that our imagination, tho' capable of framing great and mighty things, yet can frame nothing but what comes infinitely below, or is indeed nothing in comparison of Heaven. The most stately, most beautiful,

ful, and most magnificent Palaces of this world, if compared to Heaven, would be no more than the poorest cottages of mud. The Apocalypse describes it a city, the twelve gates of which are of pearl, the walls and foundations all of precious stones, the streets paved with pure gold, shining like chrystal. *O Israel, says the Prophet, How great is the house of God, and how vast the place of his possessions! my soul covets and fairs for the courts of our Lord.*

The power of God appears in his creation of the world; his mercy in the redemption; his justice in the punishment of the wicked; and his greatness and magnificence in the reward he gives his servants; which is so great, that neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor can it ever enter into the heart or mind of man to conceive what God has prepared for his Elect: So that though the Martyrs have suffered such terrible torments to gain it, and many of God's servants undergone such great austerities for the same effect; yet the Holy Scripture says it is given them for nothing, because all the sufferings of this life have no proportion with the glory prepared for it. We may better understand its worth by the blood which the Son of God has shed to merit it for us; whereas one drop was of an infinite value, he has shed it all to merit us that glory;

glory; so that we may say with truth, it is worth the life of God, and that none but God could merit it.

II. POINT.

Consider, that it is the seeing and enjoying God, which makes the compleat happiness of the blessed, because he is an infinite good, universal, eternal; and, in a word, capable to content all our desires. The manner how we shall enjoy him is, as St. John says, we shall be like him; that is to say, we shall be pure, holy, wise, powerful, happy, and perfect as he is. He will change and transform us into himself, not by destroying our being, but by uniting it to his, he will communicate to us his nature, his greatness, his knowledge, his sanctity, his felicity, his riches, by which we shall in some sort become God's, as the iron cast into the fire becomes fire.

Who can explicate the joy of a soul when she enters heaven and is united to her sovereign good! O amorous transports! O sweet embraces! Well may she say, *I have found him whom my soul loves; I will not let him go, he is all mine and I am all his.* The comforts and consolations which God will replenish her with, and the honour and glory he bestows upon her, can only be comprehended by himself, neither man nor angels
can

can conceive, nor express them. What a comfort will it be to have done and suffered much for God, and to have resisted all the temptations that would have drawn her from doing her duty, and, by consequence, would have deprived her of the happiness she enjoys, and will eternally enjoy. O my soul ! let us think what we have done and suffered for heaven, and what we will do for the future. We see what Christ and his Saints have done for it, and since it is given as a reward, we must merit it, life is granted for that end only.

III. POINT.

Consider that the body will also have its delights which consists in these four things: the Place, the Company, the Dowries of Glory, and the Durance of it, which is Eternity. As to the first, which is the Place, it is the Celestial Jerusalem, the Order, Beauty, Greatness, and Riches thereof, can neither be described nor conceived. Secondly, the Company. There will be an innumerable multitude of all nations, tribes, people, and tongues ! If it is so agreeable to live and converse with such as are noble, learned, and of agreeable conversation, how much more to have those angelical Spirits for companions, who are endowed with all manner of sciences ? Thirdly, Their bodies

dies will be glorified by the gifts of subtilty, impassibility, agility, and clarity: *Their bodies shall shine as suns in the kingdom of their Father.* Each sense shall have its delights; the sights shall be delighted with beholding the glorious bodies of the saints, especially that of Christ and his sacred Mother, the hearing with harmonious musick, &c. the heart will be filled with inexpressible pleasures! We shall see the secrets of God's Councils and of his Providence both over us and over others, and how he has loved and does love us. Our will, after an unspeakable manner, will adhere to God, and be as it were transformed into him by love; whence it will ever overflow with excess of joy, the vision and possession of God being a bottomless ocean of delights.

Though the Blessed will each moment enjoy the pleasures they are to enjoy for all eternity; yet, according to some Doctors of the Church, they will in some sort find new pleasures, as they advance in the vast extent of eternity: For, as St. Augustin very well remarks, they will always be replenished, yet never satiated; because tho' filled with God, each according to his capacity, yet they are never so satiated but that they will still desire to see and taste those delights more, and will find new satisfactions in them for all eternity. Good God,

God, what an infinite recompence for the little we do for you ! St. Augustin says that God rewards and punishes like a God as he is ; if he does both according to his power, what must be the reward and punishment ? May we never be so unhappy as to lose the first and experience the latter.

Reflections and Resolutions.

If we can labour so much for a short miserable life, what ought we not to do for an eternal one ! how unjust is it to desire to have that for nothing, which has cost Christ and his Saints so dear.

If we patiently suffer the incommodities of this life, we shall enjoy the satisfactions of the next. Chuse in which you will enjoy it, for that depends on you : for you must not expect happiness here and hereafter.

If you desire true honour, and to render your name and memory famous, the secure way is to labour to become a Saint : the honour God does his Saints in Heaven, is incomparably greater than all honour that is rendered them upon earth.

If you desire to become a Saint, and to partake with them of eternal happiness, you must go the way they have taken, for no other will lead you to it. And this is certain

tain truth, that you must be either a Saint or a devil, and dwell for Eternity with the one or the other, there is no medium !

That you may attain to the first, frequent the Sacraments, think of, and be grateful to Christ for all he has done and suffered to merit that happiness for you : and beg him to apply his sacred merits to you, that so you may acquire it. Make daily recourse to our blessed Lady, to obtain you an entrance into the Kingdom of her Son : she never intercedes in vain for any. Lastly, endeavour to bribe the porters of Heaven, which, St. Justinian says, are the poor ; give them large Alms according to your abilities.

F I N I S.

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